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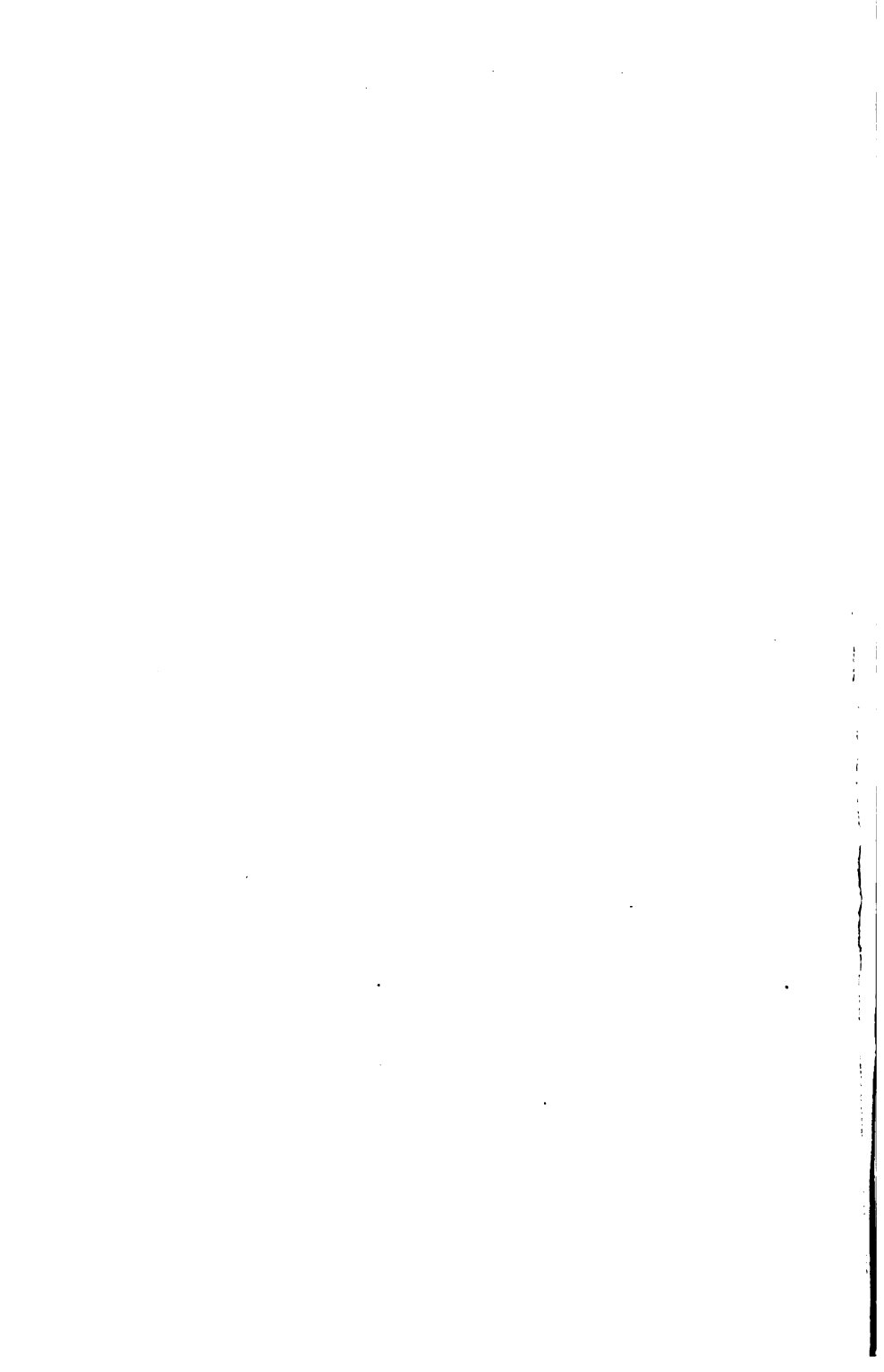
JEFFERSON DAVIS  
HIS LIFE *AND* PERSONALITY

By MORRIS SCHAFF

GIFT OF  
JANE K.SATHER







**JEFFERSON DAVIS**  
**HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY**



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**HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY**

BY  
**MORRIS SCHAFF**

AUTHOR OF  
THE SPIRIT OF OLD WEST POINT, THE BATTLE  
OF THE WILDERNESS, THE SUNSET  
OF THE CONFEDERACY



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## **To My Friends**

**GENERAL ELBERT WHEELER, Nashua, New Hampshire**

**THOMAS ALLEN, Esquire, Boston, Massachusetts**

**MRS. MARY DEARING CHRISTIAN, Lynchburg, Virginia**

**ARTHUR LORD, Esquire, Plymouth, Massachusetts**

**and last, but not least,**

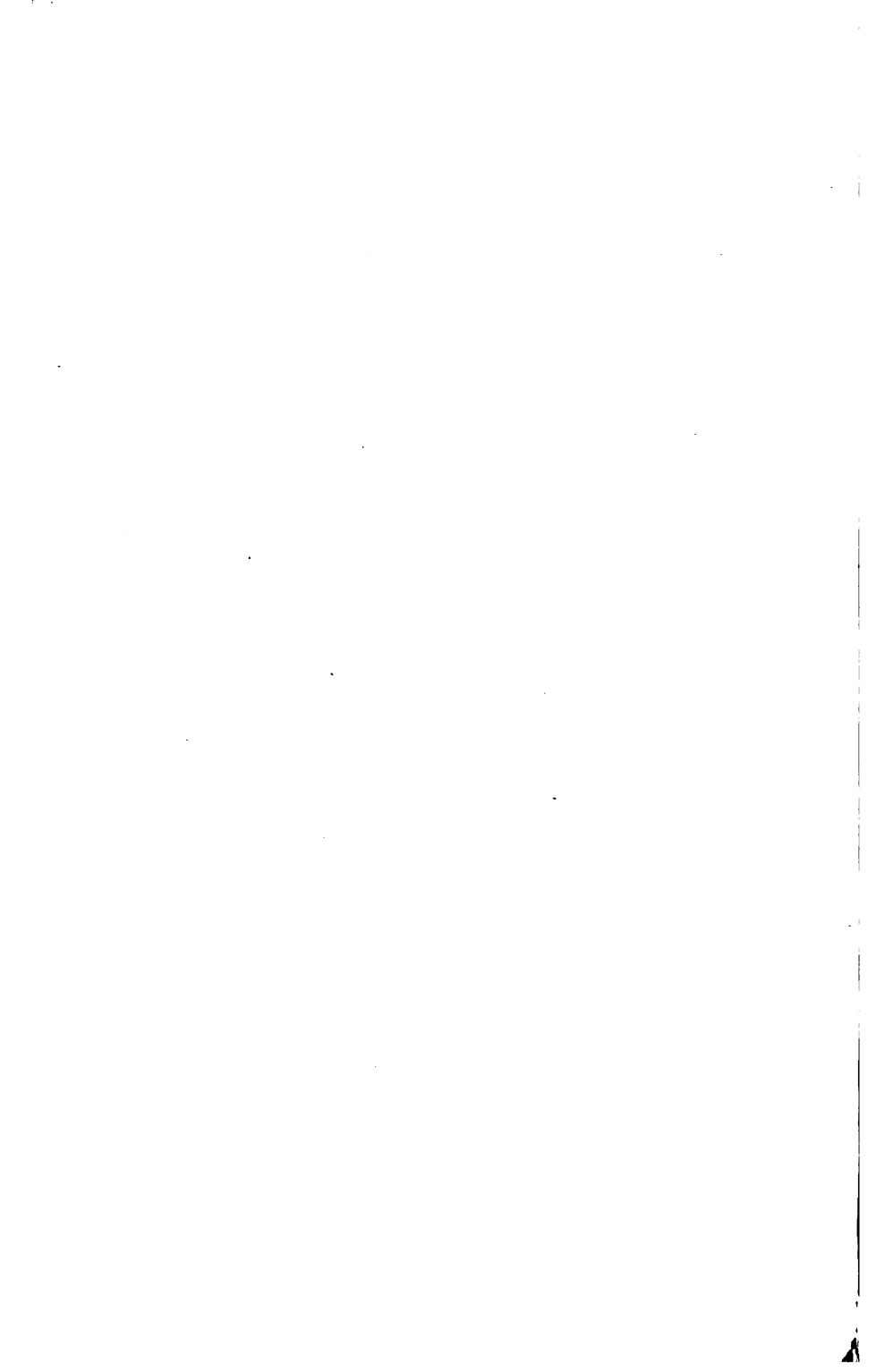
**HONORABLE HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER, Lexington, Virginia**

**this book is dedicated  
as a token of attachment and esteem.**



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# JEFFERSON DAVIS

## HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY

### CHAPTER I

THERE are two reasons for undertaking to write this book. The first and main one is this: a longing to see justice done, so far as my pen may prevail, to Jefferson Davis, President of the ill-starred Southern Confederacy, who, I feel and believe, has had unfair treatment by the historians of the great war between the States, known as the Southern Rebellion, and against whose armies I fought on many fields, including the bloody ones of Chancellorsville, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. So then, it is not through sympathy with the cause he was at the head of that I take up my pen; no, no, but at the entreaty of two mighty advocates, Truth and Fair Play. I am cheered on, furthermore, in my undertaking by one of the handsomest, the noblest of our country's virtues, Magnanimity, proclaiming that, out of hatred and revenge to perpetuate a false and unjust portrait of the leader of the Confederacy, the sons and grandsons of whose gallant defenders helped so bravely to carry their united country's

flag to victory on the fields of France, is unworthy and out of keeping with a great-hearted people.

Moreover, Jefferson Davis, beside being leader in the most unparalleled struggle of modern times — a struggle commemorated by monuments, ceremonial, and poetry that deck the green slopes of that height called History — was in manner and reality, in private and public life, the finest product of a democracy; namely, a gentleman. The world has had many types of the hero, statesman and philosopher, but only one in its conception of the gentleman. Again, his mind was not only stored with political, scientific, and historic knowledge but ornamented also with the ripened fruits and beauties of literature; and his heart, the mind's working companion, was naturally bold and had not only stood the dangers of the battlefield but was strung also with the finest chords of sweet tenderness.

The second reason is the silent, personal pleasure that will attend the use of my pen in such a cause; not arguing or contending, but talking as it were to an open-minded reader who, I hope, on taking up this book, is blessed with a light heart; but should he be so unfortunate as to be harassed by cares and sorrows will, while reading it, forget them all and find his pillow sweet.

We learn, from a mere fragment of an autobiography dictated a few years before Jefferson Davis' death, that he was born on June 3, 1808, at Fair-

view, Todd County, Kentucky, and that his ancestors, on his father's side, were Welsh Baptists who one May morning, 1701, in a company of twenty of like faith "after bidding farewell to their home and brethren" — so says an old Delaware church record — sailed from Milford Haven, South Wales, on the ship *James and Mary* and landed in Philadelphia on the eighth of the following September.

Once at the end of their long voyage they made their way — and no doubt with glad hearts — to a settlement of fellow churchmen in Delaware, and cast their lot with them. In 1735, the Delaware Colony swarmed and settled on the Peedee River, South Carolina, at a place afterward known as the Welsh Neck Baptist Church. About 1754 or 1755, Evan Davis, an old bachelor, the son of John, one of the three brothers of the original company from Wales, drifted down to the Peedee and there married a widow Williams, whose maiden name was Emory, with two children, boys; and in 1756, Samuel, Jefferson Davis' father, was born.

Before the Revolutionary War broke out the family had moved to near Augusta, Georgia, and the head of it, Evan Davis, had died. While the war was going on his widow sent Samuel with supplies to his two half brothers who were in the field, and, boy like, yielding to the spirit of adventure, fondness and pride in their gallantry, he stayed with them. Later and notwithstanding his youth,



he was made captain of a company and led it to the defense of Savannah when attacked by the British.

After the war was over, the young Captain was elected Clerk of the Courts and then fell in love with and married Jane Cook, the mother of Jefferson Davis. She was the daughter of a famously eloquent Scotch-Irish Baptist preacher, and Mr. Davis in his fragmentary autobiography says in loving terms that she had a poetic nature, the source perchance of many a charm which graces the speeches and addresses of her distinguished son.

Here then in Jefferson Davis' veins we have a mingling of Welsh and Scotch blood carrying the roots and seeds of their racial virtues and characteristics, chief of which has ever been a grim tenacity of convictions and a prompt readiness to risk all, and if need be to lose all in their defense. Davis' blood fairly teemed with this ancestral characteristic and we are quite sure he would have been spared many a trial, many a poignant hour if, when his wounds were bleeding on the field of Buena Vista in the Mexican War, the veins that carried a possible excess of this too defiant blood had been somewhat more completely emptied.

But let all this be as it may, the voice of Kentucky, with its ever wild fascination for the frontiersman, was heard in Georgia by the young Captain and his wife Jane, and about 1790, with their rapidly

increasing family, they started through the wilderness for Tennessee, for the famous Blue Grass region; and there Jefferson, the last of the ten boys and girls, was born on June 3, 1808.

In a cabin within forty miles of his birthplace, eight months and nine days later, February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born; and we think even the stars must have wondered over the contrasting fate of these two children asleep in their cradles: one of them named in honor of the living President, Thomas Jefferson, whose views on the rights of the States determined his namesake's career; the other in honor of the patriarch Abraham, revered by Jews, Christians and Mohammedans the world over and whose namesake is likewise revered throughout the civilized world and more and more tenderly loved from generation to generation by his fellow countrymen. Was there a far-seeing genius that presided over the naming of these children?

A Baptist church stands now on the spot where Jefferson Davis was born, and when it was dedicated, long after the war and old age had whitened his hair, its builders begged him to come back and join in the services, and, with a pensive gladness, he complied with their request.

When he was four or five years old his father sold his tobacco raising and thorough-bred horse breeding plantation and struck off again into the

wilderness, this time for the Bayou Teche country in Louisiana. But the swampy climate proved so bad that he soon sold out and bought a large tract in Wilkenson County, Mississippi, building his house on a knoll where the health-giving breezes from the neighboring yellow pine forests blew softly over it.

When the future President of the Southern Confederacy was seven years old, one of his father's friends, Major Hinds, who had fought in the battle of New Orleans under Jackson, made a trip back to his old home in Kentucky and Mr. Davis asked him to take Jefferson with him to a school for boys known as St. Thomas College, kept by Dominican Fathers in Washington County, Kentucky. Mr. Davis took this step without his wife's consent or knowledge, because, perchance, he well knew she would be unwilling to part with the baby, as it were, of her large family.

The Major's party, with negro servants and suitable camp outfit, consisted of his wife, his sister and his son Howell, about Jefferson's age. All were mounted — the boys on ponies. Here let me say — and with a feeling of pensiveness, that in view of the happiness with which these boys enjoyed their ponies and the camp fires, I cannot for the moment throw off — that Jefferson's little companion on this ride became a soldier in the Confederate army and was killed soon after the war was over while trying to

separate two of his friends engaged in a pistol duel in Greenville, Mississippi.

The trail the Major followed wound through the wide, shadow-flecked wilderness of the Choctah and Cherokee Nations, and when at last he reached Nashville, Tennessee, he at once led his party to the door of his old commander, Jackson, who welcomed him and his charge with such heartiness that they stayed there for several weeks.

Jefferson Davis never forgot that visit to the Hermitage with its grove of towering primeval trees and vast estate of grain and pasture fields, and to his old age cherished the remembrance of Mrs. Jackson's charms and the mingled dignity and simplicity of her heroic and famous husband.

The lad's journey ended at the gateway of the monks who, besides the school, had a large landed property, flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, flour mills and slaves; a very consistent and workable combination of the spiritual and the worldly.

As might be assumed, nearly all of the pupils were Catholics, but to the monks' credit, they did not try to make a proselyte of their new pupil and in later days, not alone when fame rested on him but at the time of his great trials, spoke well of him and were his warm friends to the end.

He was the youngest in the school and slept on a cot in a room with one of the priests. One night, as soon as the candle was blown out, the older boys

who had a grudge against the priest, bombarded the room with cabbages, turnips and other like vegetables. On the immediate investigation of the riot, the indignant authorities asked little Jeff if he knew who were the leaders and actors in the affront; he said he did, but refused to tell on them. Whereupon one of the tonsured Fathers strapped him down to receive the usual punishment, but before delivering a blow asked him if he was ready to give the names of the culprits. He replied, "No," but he was willing, however, to disclose one fact; he knew who blew out the candle, the signal for the vegetable-equipped firing party. On being asked who it was, he responded that he had done it. His answer was so unexpectedly frank and he was so little that the monk unstrapped him, and let him off with a serious lecture.

At the end of the second year, and President Davis intimates at the insistence of his mother, he was sent home, escorted thither on a steamboat down the Ohio and Mississippi by a young law student at Transylvania. His brother Isaac met him at the landing, and, to surprise their mother, it was mischievously planned between them that little Jeff should go ahead and ask her if she had seen any stray horses about the place. He found her sitting at the door and boldly putting the question, she turned and clasped him in her arms saying, "No, but I have got my stray boy." He then ran

out to his father in the fields who to his wonder, for his father was habitually undemonstrative in his affection, embraced and kissed him.

He attended neighborhood and select schools till he was sixteen and then entered the sophomore class of Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky. That mysterious spirit, which in old age we call fate but in boyhood our good angel, must have directed his footsteps back to those college grounds of his native State, for surely he could not have been thrown in with a student body endowed with more natural ability or animated, as time proved, with more latent ambition; for six of his fellow collegians, some from the North and some from the South, were members of the United States Senate at the same time with him. Now, in the eye of every instinctively high-minded youth on entering a student body, Nature in her friendly and wise provisions, plants an ideal of what constitutes manliness and honor adorned by intellectual strength. In some of the classes above him he soon discovers the embodiment of that ideal and considers it one of the happiest days of his life when he can call him a friend. Hail, all hail! "Nick" Bowen, Jones, W. G., who fell at Chickamauga and Ramseur at Cedar Creek in the valley, you filled my West Point boyhood's ideals, and your manly faces are still blooming as in your youth for me. The one in that brilliant group at Transylvania who filled this

ideal when Davis matriculated was Albert Sidney Johnston, large in frame, erect, of open countenance and clothed in natural dignity.

Johnston preceded Davis to West Point, maintaining among the cadets drawn from the high life of all sections of the country the same preëminence for character and ability as at Transylvania. It is well known, it is a matter of history, that Davis appointed Johnston second on the list of general officers for the Confederate armies, and that he fell at Shiloh just on the verge of gaining what promised to be an overwhelming victory. His untimely death was the heaviest blow in the mind of Mr. Davis and that of others which the Confederacy ever met, and Davis never spoke of him and that battle in his old age without eyes filled with the dew of tenderness.

Just after passing his examination for the senior class, and with honors, Davis' father died on July 4, two years to a day before the death of ex-President Jefferson, in honor of whom he had named his boy. Shortly afterward, Davis' oldest brother, Joseph Emory, who from that time on was like a second father, secured for him from President Monroe an appointment as Cadet to West Point; and in September, 1824, he entered that famous institution which through its incarnated traditions and mighty over-arching spirit had much to do, as we believe, indeed we know, in developing certain inher-

ent qualities, some playing a conspicuously favorable and some an equally conspicuously unfavorable part in his eventful life.

In the class two years ahead of him was his friend, Albert Sidney Johnston; in the next class above, Leonidas Polk, afterwards Bishop of Louisiana, who, on the breaking out of the war, laid off his vestments and was commissioned by President Davis a general officer in the Confederate Army and, like Johnston, met death on the field of battle. He and Sidney Johnston were Jefferson Davis' closest friends at West Point, a relation of joy and tenderness, confidences and affection which every graduate will duly remember, for it blossoms on to old age in the memory of every one of them.

From Virginia, in the Corps above Davis were Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston, little dreaming what the future had in store for them in connection with the tallish, spare, dignified but ever graciously polite Cadet in the second class below them. Yet, yet, the web was in the loom, the threads with their varying hues were on the spools, and the shuttle ready waiting till the guns would open on Sumter to weave the involved and many-hued designs of their fate.

A. E. Church, son of the Chief Justice of Connecticut, graduated at the head of Davis' class and in my day at West Point, 1858, was professor of mathematics, and the only time I ever saw Jefferson



Davis, he was walking at the close of a golden September day between him and Professor Bartlett under the bending elms that line the plain. We had just passed them when my companion, a Southern Cadet, observed, "that is Jeff Davis." I turned and recall with distinctness his graceful figure and distinguished bearing. He was arrayed in a dark blue serge and wore a soft, light-colored, low-crowned, gracefully brimmed hat. I have always been sorry my Southern classmate did not tell me who he was before we had met and passed them, for my memory, I am sure, would have carried away the look in his face.

He graduated July 12, 1828, standing twenty-third in a class of thirty-three members. And now, let me dwell for a moment on his four years of education at West Point, and make clear if I can my convictions as to how advantageous and disadvantageous it proved to be as that beaming career mounted and unfolded.

In his day and for many years afterwards, as soon as a Cadet entered West Point, its spirit began to prepare the ground of his nature, not as for an athlete or football player, but to bear the fruits of the educated soldier and gentleman. To this end and in keeping with its traditions inherited from its Revolutionary founders, it held before him day in and day out, good manners, honor, simplicity, courage and love of truth as the virtues that, in

connection with the ornaments of a cultivated mind, should adorn his life.

To consummate this high purpose the Academy as a seat of learning was especially fortunate in its student body; for in those days, as from the very beginning, only the sons of families of social distinction, as a rule, received appointments. The inevitable result was that the air of an aristocracy more or less pervaded West Point, infusing the bearing of every graduate, albeit unconsciously to him, with some of its innate cast of exclusiveness.

While this combination of family distinction, culture and a life position as an officer of the Army with its attendant possibilities of military glory gave the graduate a ready entrance to the best society, yet it had one very weighty drawback, it cut him off from the great body of the people who, conscious of equal abilities but less fortunate and more or less doomed to toil, very naturally, for such is our nature, withheld its friendliness, meeting his assured advances with a cold eye. This was especially true of the demeanor of the descendants of the Puritans; who, very proud at heart and blessed with many, many fine qualities, yet sparingly so of the spirit of good fellowship, to this very day are keenly resentful to any asserted social and political preëminence.

Now such was the inborn nature of Jefferson Davis that while all the virtues of West Point

education, honor, frankness, truthfulness and good manners found a native soil to grow in, still in it too were already germinated seeds of a certain reserve and dignity that found the air congenial and had flourished by the time he graduated into a distinctively aristocratic bearing that clung to him to the end; and much, very much, as all the world knows to his serious disadvantage in his presidential life.

So then, the result of his four years at West Point, instead of inculcating the pliancy and assumed cordiality of the politician, was to develop a personality of the reverse order. But, heavy as was this handicap, the powers and duties attending the Presidency of the Confederacy imposed a far heavier one upon him; in this that from the earliest days of the Academy there has been in the minds of the militia and volunteers, South and North, an unfavorable prepossession of its graduates; that they not only held themselves above and aloof from them, but, what was more galling, gave their fellow graduates in time of war the precedence over them no matter how well or bravely they had met their duties.

And as to this umbrage and unjust accusation I do protest. For this is a fact, let it weigh what it will; in my long life many a fellow West Point graduate has opened his heart to me around campfires in the field and before blazing hearths with

their evoking unreserve, and not a word or even a hint ever fell from the lips of one of them to justify such a charge.

But let this be as it may, no sooner had the war begun and Jefferson Davis had to make appointments for its armies than many of the officers of volunteers and militia, but chiefly ambitious politicians hungering for military honors, whom he had refused to appoint to high places as leaders of troops, at once became his bitter, malicious enemies, declaiming that, as usual, like all West Pointers, he had favored his fellow graduates. And thus was bred a virulent faction; a faction whose poison soon mingled in the editorial pages of leading newspapers, undermining the President's influence and, as it persisted throughout the war, weakening like a deep-seated carbuncle the body of the Confederacy itself.

But, however intense and personal was this hostility, not even his most relentless enemy ever alleged that in deed or act, in sunshine or shadow, Jefferson Davis violated a single one of the great virtues which West Point had helped to develop in his character; namely, honor, courage, fidelity to public and private trusts, purity of life, and the bearing and speech of a gentleman. And it can be said with all truth that his stern old Alma Mater had no son who walked her velvety green plain, who loved her more deeply or cherished more her ideals. When his voice was almost gone, and death

waiting at the doorstep, from his pillow he whispered of her and his West Point bygone friends in loving terms, and we think the Spirit of Old West Point heard his whispering love and would have smoothed his brow if she could.

We have dwelt, and perhaps too long, on some of the advantages and disadvantages of his West Point education; but not, we hope, without lighting a candle here and there in the mind of the reader, helping him to find his way, not necessarily to a favorable, but a fair judgment of Jefferson Davis as we go along with the narrative.

## CHAPTER II

UPON graduation he was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the First Regular Infantry, and in September, 1828, at the expiration of the usual graduation leave, reported at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis.

Shortly afterward he was ordered to join his company at Fort Crawford, the present site of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, journeying thither on one of the triple-decked, stern-wheel steamboats, an imperial princess of navigation in those days, saluting grandly as they approached and departed from cities and towns with prolonged, reverberating, hoarse blasts, arousing in the breast of every passenger, however obscure, the momentarily pleasing sense of a vague importance.

Fort Crawford at that time was one of the Army's extreme outposts on the frontier; but for a hundred years or more before its day on the same site had been a trading post of the fur gathering companies of Quebec. For at that point, near the mouth of the Wisconsin, one of their long, winding trails through the wilderness of lakes, forests, and beaver-homing streams crossed the Mississippi, thence bearing on over the wide ranges of buffalo and under soaring

eagles to the faraway upper Missouri. As I write these lines, the native wildness of that historic trail steals back into this room and I wish, reader, that we could have travelled and camped with its care-free hunters and trappers.

Around the fort and up and down the river were many Indians; Sacs and Foxes, Wyandots, Menominees, Winnebagos and Pottawatomies, who, crowded back day in and day out from their hunting grounds and the graves of their people by equally fierce and unmerciful frontiersmen, were not in a friendly mood, and on several occasions when Davis was out with detachments to get timber for the completion of the fort, he and his men barely escaped massacre from bands on the warpath.

But that first winter he had another and more pleasing experience, one that he enjoyed recalling in his old age. With a sergeant, he was out on a reconnaissance and some forty miles from the fort when night overtook them. After wandering through the darkness hour after hour, to their joy they came across a cabin. On hailing, its occupant came to the door and asked, "Who is there?"

Davis recognized the voice and answered, "Were you ever at Transylvania?"

"Yes," responded the pioneer, "I was there from 1821 to 1825."

"Do you remember a college boy named Jeff Davis?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, I am Jeff."

"That was enough for me; I pulled him off his horse and into my cabin and it was hours before either of us would think of sleep," said George W. Jones, later United States Senator from Iowa, in a statement after Mr. Davis' death.

The next spring with a small detachment he was sent up the Wisconsin to Yellow Creek, somewhat over a hundred miles from Crawford, to establish a sawmill for additional lumber. There he met the Indians again, but gaining their affection, he was formally made a chief of the tribe, and an old squaw a few years afterward, out of friendship and in remembrance of him, notified an adjacent post of a contemplated attack. While on this lonely duty he was seized with such a debilitating illness that he had to be carried about and nursed like a child; but, fortunately, he had with him James Pemberton, colored, a slave in law but on the footing with his master, whom he had played with as a boy, of a friend and glad companion — if ever there were two friends in this world that knew each other and loved each other, they were Jefferson Davis and James Pemberton.

Just before the breaking out of the Black Hawk War, Davis rejoined his regiment at Fort Crawford, then commanded by Zachary Taylor, later President Taylor. Colonel Taylor had his family with him — three girls and a boy — and Jefferson Davis for his



first wife, married the eldest, Sarah Knox Taylor, as will be told later.

April, 1831, Davis accompanied the troops in the campaign against the Indians; their line of march, made in early May, was up the pebbly-shored Rock River; the wild plums, honeysuckles and pawpaws in the thickets here and there along its sycamore-shadowed banks, and the flowers of the prairies that stretched away from them were in full bloom.

Besides the Regulars under Taylor, there were militia organizations called out by the Governor of Illinois, a thousand or more men, and among them first as a private and later as a captain of one of these companies was Abraham Lincoln, who brought back from that campaign something that Davis' nature could not give lodgment or whose value as a foil he could not appreciate, namely, several additions to that famous granary of funny stories by which Lincoln avoided many a conflict with the politicians of his own party, who, no matter how angry on entering the White House, always went away amused and more highly attached to him than ever because of the clever way he had dodged their issue behind a funny story.

The Indians were overwhelmingly defeated in August at the Battle of Bad Axe some twenty odd miles above Fort Crawford, and a few days later, their leader, Black Hawk, then an old man, his son and the Prophet, a tall, straight chief with a broad

face, large, full eyes, abundant coarse black hair ornamented with an eagle feather and dressed in a suit of white deerskin, were taken prisoners by a treacherous band of Winnebagos and delivered up to the authorities at Fort Crawford.

A moving account of the sufferings of the Indians in that last great battle of their race east of the Mississippi may be found in a letter from Mrs. Albert Sidney Johnston, whose husband was in the engagement, to a member of her family. In years gone by, more than once I lounged on what is known as Black Hawk's Tower at the junction of the Rock River with the Mississippi and pondered over their fate. That spot with its commanding outlook had been the home of his tribe for generation after generation; his forefathers and favorite daughter were buried there, and in my day the rows of their cornfields were still traceable. The view is wide and you see the distant skyline asleep in the bosom of the prairie.

It was decided that Black Hawk, his son, and a number of others should be sent as prisoners of war to St. Louis and Davis was detailed by Colonel Taylor to conduct them thither. Black Hawk says in his autobiography dictated the following year: "Then started to Jefferson Barracks (St. Louis) in a steamboat (the *Winnebago*) under the charge of a young war chief, who treated us all with much kindness. He is a good and brave young chief with

whose conduct I was much pleased. On our way down we called at Galena and remained a short time. The people crowded to the boat to see us; but the war chief would not permit them to enter the apartment where we were — knowing, from what his own feelings would have been if he had been placed in a similar situation, that we did not want a gaping crowd around us." Verily, Davis' consideration for the feelings of his captives speaks well for him.

On their arrival at St. Louis a ball and chain were fastened on Black Hawk, and while there Washington Irving went to see him and wrote, "He is upwards of seventy years old, has a fine head, a Roman style of nose and prepossessing countenance." Later he was sent to Fort Monroe for confinement, little dreaming that Jefferson Davis would follow in his steps to the same place and there also wear manacles, people craving to gape at him as at Black Hawk. But Black Hawk had almost the freedom of the Post with its widely encircling green ramparts, while Davis was closely guarded by double lines of sentinels in a semi-dark casemate, no one allowed to approach it, sentinels and blazing lights in the room throughout the night.

Black Hawk was so kindly treated during his imprisonment that on parting with the commanding officer, Colonel Eustis, he said, "The memory of your friendship will remain till the Great Spirit

says it is time for Black Hawk to sing his death song," and presented Colonel Eustis with a white deerskin hunting dress and some feathers of the white eagle.

Jefferson Davis carried away no such feeling at the end of his two years' confinement, at least for his first keeper, Gen. Nelson A. Miles, and, in view of his treatment, it is no wonder; but to the end of his life he had the warmest gratitude for his last keeper, Colonel Burton. There is something striking to me, partaking of the mysterious, in these almost identical occurrences in the lives of Davis and Black Hawk.

Upon the creation of the First Dragoons, winter of 1832, a regiment famous in the history of our Cavalry, Davis was selected for one of its officers and soon became its Adjutant. Its headquarters were at Fort Gibson and on one occasion, when it was about to set off for the Creek Nation, his Sergeant-Major who was sick in the hospital was forbidden by the Surgeon to go with the troops. He appealed to Davis, who on his death bed in New Orleans received the following letter from the old Sergeant (Davis died on December 6):

"November 28, 1889.

*Honored Sir:*

Once when there was much sickness prevailing among the First Dragoons at Fort Gibson, and I was

very sick in the hospital, the regiment was ordered for the benefit of its health to remove from the Cherokee Nation; but the surgeon refused to allow me to be removed with the regiment. However you came to my aid and had me taken to the Creek Nation where I rapidly recovered. And I hope that your temporary removal from Beauvoir to New Orleans will result in a like benefit to your health, and that when the long roll is sounded you will find yourself in the camp of the Great Commander.

I am your old Sergeant-Major of the First Dragoons."

Reader, let me hope that when the long roll is sounded you and I will be in the camp of that same Great Commander.

Soon after the incident referred to in the Sergeant's letter, Davis, longing for the quieter life of a planter, on June 30, 1835, resigned from the Army, and in July married Sarah Knox Taylor, the daughter of General Taylor, whom he had been in love with and engaged to, for over two years. Now, his enemies, passion at its height, and with pens dripping with gall, declared, in an article which appeared in an encyclopedia, that beside being a slaveholder and a plotting traitor he was base enough to elope with Miss Taylor; but here are the facts.

When his daughter's engagement to Davis was announced, the General told a friend that he had

only the kindest feelings for her choice, but he had hoped that not one of his daughters would marry into the Army and undergo the inconveniences and hardships that he had met with in his own soldier life.

Subsequently a garrison court-martial was ordered, with Taylor as president, the other members a Major "Tom" Smith (between whom and Taylor there was a bitter feud), Davis and a young officer who had just reported for duty and who, when the Court assembled, appeared in citizen's dress, explaining that his uniform for some reason or other had not been forwarded from St. Louis, his last station. Taylor, a stickler for customs and rules, was unwilling to go on with the cases until the lieutenant could take his seat in uniform with sword at his side. An angry discussion at once broke out between him and Smith over the question of proceeding and, to the old General's surprise and disgust, Davis voted with Smith to go on with the trial. A colloquy at once took place between Taylor and Davis over his vote, which was ended by the old General letting fly an oath — and in that line we fear he shared with his fellow Army and Navy officers a fairly strong vocabulary — that any man who would vote with "Tom" Smith on a question of that kind should never, never marry one of his daughters, and forbade Davis from ever entering his house.

It is with a smile my eye rests on that group;

and I wonder how many young officers of this day, engaged as Davis was to the old General's daughter, would have voted against him? Not one in a hundred we venture to say. Major "Tom" Smith would have been outvoted and the Court adjourned till the careless lieutenant could appear properly, full uniform, epaulettes, sash and sword, the accused meanwhile confined in the guardhouse.

When a year or more had elapsed after this amusing court-martial scene, Miss Taylor told her father that, as he had not alleged anything against the character or honor of her lover, she was going to marry him. But that vote with "Tom" Smith was still rankling and he would not give his consent; so she made her arrangements to go to her aunt in Kentucky and there be married. A stateroom was taken on a boat for St. Louis, a Captain McRee escorted Miss Taylor to the landing and lo, there was her father transacting some business; she made a final appeal to him, but without avail, and sailed away to Kentucky, and in the house of her aunt and in the presence of two of General Taylor's sisters and many others of the Taylor family they were married June, 1835. And this, Jefferson Davis' enemies with a sneer called an elopement; much to the amusement of Satan's secretaries at their desks.

They set out at once for his plantation, "Brierfield" on the Mississippi, a part of "Hurricane,"

the greater plantation of his brother, Joseph Emory, some thirty miles below Vicksburg. In August, to escape the chill-and-fever malady which the unacclimated to that region had to go through, they went to his sister's plantation, Locust Grove, Bayou Sara, Louisiana. But the dreaded, enfeebling disease had sown its seeds and within a day or two both came down with it and soon were dangerously sick. Chill after chill is followed by a raging fever in this ailment and, under its ravages day and night, it was not long till Mrs. Davis became delirious and her end drew near. Mr. Davis meanwhile was not told of her condition, but on hearing her voice a few hours before she breathed her last, September 15, — she had begun to sing in her delirium "Faery Bells," a song she had sung to him many a time,— he struggled from his sick chamber to her room and found her dying. She was buried in his sister's plantation graveyard, and there she lies. "Faery Bells" ! and the pathos of it all! Malignity, Vituperation and Vindictiveness, ill-visaged trio, and boon companions of the Devil's secretaries, a word with you. Miss Taylor had not eloped with her lover, and you should have kept away from that lone grave on Bayou Sara!

After days and days during which his life hung in the balance, his faithful colored servant, James Pemberton, lifted him from his bed and carried him home, but a cough set in and late in the year,



for the benefit of his health, he went to Cuba, and the following spring made his way home through New York and Washington.

At Washington he fell in with his Transylvanian friend, Jones, he who had given him shelter the night he was lost some forty miles from Fort Crawford and whom meanwhile ambition and ability had lifted from a cabin to the United States Senate. With him and others, Jefferson Davis called on the President, Martin Van Buren, who interested in his talk, asked Davis to breakfast with him.

After breakfast Van Buren, who like Davis put a stake on personal care and appearance, noticing his guest's shoes, a fine pair that set off his small, proudly arched feet, inquired, "Where did you get those shoes, may I ask?" "New Orleans, Mr. President," replied Davis. "I had a pair like that made in France," said Van Buren, "but I have never seen that stitch since."

Van Buren was noted for his grace and good breeding and was the first to adorn the White House with here and there a rare, precious bowl and vase filled with roses; when I last saw his grave at Kinderhook tall half-wild grass was waving over it, and lichens were slowly stitching their gray seals on his time-bleached marble tombstone.

## CHAPTER III

IN due time Jefferson Davis' eyes, after a passage over the Alleghenies by stage and down the Ohio and Mississippi by boat, fell on his blooming cotton fields and then on his empty house. Faery Bells! He turned his steps away from it and sought his brother's door and there for five or six years made his home.

Now, since in those four or five years of practically unbroken seclusion the wealth of intellectual acquirements, knowledge of science, history and literature that distinguished and adorned his official and private life were harvested and the foundations of the political views which determined his career were laid, let us look at his plantation life and surroundings.

It was his rule, summer and winter, to pass hours every day in the fields on familiar terms with his slaves; and, as a result, abundant were his crops of cotton and corn, for many a light-hearted song had been sung as they grew into blade, bloom and tassel.

His system for the government of his slaves provided for a regular court with a judge, jury and sheriff of their own body for the trial of all offenses committed by slaves against each other or serious

violations of rules or proprieties. His servant James Pemberton was the judge of this court and the only appeal from its decisions was to Davis himself, who invariably modified or remitted the sentences when severe. When Pemberton died, Davis had to hire white overseers, but in no case were they permitted to inflict corporal punishment.

Any skilled workman, as blacksmith or carpenter, was allowed to do work for neighboring plantations, returning to his master common day-laborer's pay and keeping the rest for himself. A missionary of the Methodist Church was engaged and his salary paid for religious training of the slaves. When a marriage took place Mrs. Davis supplied the wedding gown and when death came the master manifested his sympathy with the sorrowful. Those who were still living when death fell upon him, sent Mrs. Davis this letter:

We, the old servants and tenants of our beloved master, Honorable Jefferson Davis, have cause to mingle our tears over his death who was always so kind and thoughtful of our peace and happiness. We extend to you our humble sympathy.

Respectfully,  
Your old tenants and servants.

This letter should have been among the historic papers in the hermetically sealed copper box set in

the foundation of his monument that stands on the banks of the James in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond; for it is a bit of enduring evidence as to the kind of man he was far outweighing the work of my or any pen.

His diversion was a stud of thoroughbreds, for he and his brother were lovers of the turf and, by the way, in their stables was Black Oliver, a Canadian horse, one of whose sons, a pony-like pacer, was taken from the plantation in the Vicksburg campaign and given to Grant, who named him Jeff Davis and rode him from time to time, and this horse's neck I once stroked on our way from the Rapidan to Appomattox.

His nights and every leisure hour, for he was a born student, were passed in his brother's library, that was fairly large for those days and on whose shelves, beside the British poets, *Spectator* and *Tatler*, were all the standard works on the history of the Constitution, the *Federalist*, *Elliott's Debates*, etc., which in his solitude he read and reread. He and his brother meanwhile followed with the keenest interest the acrimonious discussion going on in Congress and the press over slavery, the original rights and sovereignty of the States, prerogatives indisputable to their minds.

But there was no one, however, to challenge the soundness of these convictions or the ultimate results if insisted upon, for they were alone in an

almost primeval wilderness; and about that let me say something, for the wilderness breeds an unself-conscious, indomitable, transparent personality and type of mind of its own.

The isolation and solitude of their plantations, as well as those throughout the South and especially the Gulf States, was very deep. They were in the midst of miles of solemn woods shadowing the leaf-stained waters of many sluggish streams and miasma-breeding swamps, and over all a heavy, brooding silence, broken by day, now near, now far, by cowbells, some keyed high, some keyed low, and at night by the lonely voice of an owl or the yelps of a band of prowling wolves. Now I am fain to think an isolation of that depth and kind is bound to play a part in the character of the human life it surrounds, developing not only the native senses of courage and freedom, but also a reflecting seriousness and the habit of looking at all questions as when in the woods, through vistas only. Moreover, the loneliness of a wilderness breeds a longing for human speech, and to gratify that longing its cabin and hewed log house indwellers would travel, as we are told and I know from boyhood experience, miles and miles to attend religious and political meetings. And once there what would they hear in those early days? Not so much the language of reason or inductive philosophy, but assertion and the figurative language of feeling; and, as feeling is the kindler of

eloquence, which in turn is but the utterance of emotion, they followed with rapture the preacher and the politician, for they were expressing their own suppressed emotions. And that, let me venture to say, is what made the sermons and the speeches of the Southern and Western orators so radiant and teeming with pathos and sentiment. It was suppressed emotions, too, that made the touching eloquence of the Indian chiefs.

Again, culture's clouds of doubt and disbelief did not hang over the minds of the speakers or audience; heaven and hell were realities to the shouting preacher; and in the years before the war when the stump orator in fierce tones, with extended right arm and closed fist, declared the sovereignty of the States, they were also realities — for did not his hearers breathe the very air of independence in their boundless woods, and had they not inherited as Davis, Lee, and every other Southerner of prominence, the idea of the sovereignty of the original colonies, not as a theory but as an indisputable fact?

Truly, truly, the natural feelings of the lonely dwellers in the piny woods of the South played a big, yes a profoundly dramatic part in the mighty sectional struggle; and those of us who had to meet their sons on the fields of Virginia, slaveholders or non-slaveholders, and be it remembered that not one in thirty of the great Stonewall Brigade, and probably not in one twenty of Pickett's Charge,

was a slaveholder, soon realized we were facing a foe of indomitable courage, fortified with heartfelt convictions as to political rights. General Sedgwick, who was killed at Spotsylvania, wrote to his sister just after Pope's defeat at Manassas, "the enemy have outgeneraled us. *Their hearts are in the cause.*" What musket, what cannon matches the heart in defense of home or a nation's life? Oh, faithful, gallant, liberty-loving organ! You are the comrade on the battlefield for me; let it be a field of defeat or victory.

So then, let us not lose sight of this wilderness background with its depths of primitive feelings and convictions, not only in Jefferson Davis' case, but the men who carried the colors of the Confederacy. For the failure of historians to appreciate duly the state of mind and heart in the South, ascribable in great measure to the influences of their wilderness homes, has done more, in my opinion, than any one thing to mislead them as to the cause of the War and to be unfair in their judgment of the Southern people.

Such then was the background of woods, political beliefs and intense provincialism in the plantation life of Jefferson Davis.

Now, since of all these influences the one that played the great and, as it turned out, fatal part in his life and that of the Southern people was the doctrine of State Rights, let us look up its grounds,

for we think it essential to a fair judgment on him and them.

Our first colonists, as we all know, settled, some on the majestic James, some on the sand dunes of Cape Cod, some on the mountain-born Delaware, and some on the Savannah.

Fortunately for the planting of good manners and the ideals of the scholar and the gentleman, the first that landed were largely drawn from the aristocratic cavalier class of Old England, and the second the Pilgrims who brought the roots and planted them of a pure democracy infused with a stern morality. To me it is truly mysterious but elating that the genius to preside over the New World saw to it that these brightest ornaments of a nation, scholarship, good manners, high ideals and a democracy purely representative, acknowledging a spiritual kingdom, should characterize the two foundation colonies, New England and Virginia.

But when and wherever they landed, they all carried with them the primal ideas of English law and customs; and no sooner were the little groups conscious of the necessity of established government, than each crystallized around certain religious and political dogmas; organized with a seat of government on the lines of an absolutely independent body, with rivers and mountains, as a rule, for their boundaries. Within these limits their original sovereignties were not to be questioned by any neigh-



boring colony. And so deeply had the spirit of these local sovereignties breathed into the daily life, that when the mother country undertook to subordinate this sovereignty under the guise of taxation, they rebelled; and on the fields of Lexington, Saratoga, Cowpens, King's Mountain and Yorktown they fought it out and won. Now what is most significant and important, as bearing on the ground of original State Rights, is this, when the peace was signed the King of England signed it acknowledging by name each of the thirteen colonies.

Here then in the King's acknowledgment of each colony's sovereignty, we have the birthplace of the doctrine of State Rights, with its fateful corollary of a right to secede from the Union. It would be idle in the light of the past to discuss that claim, the graves that were filled in four years of war to support it are arguments against it; notwithstanding, had that question been submitted to the States prior to 1830 for determination, it would, in my belief, have been carried unanimously in the affirmative. It was practically asserted by New England at Hartford, 1814, and even as late as 1854 the little hamlet of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, voted solemnly in town meeting urging its representative in Congress to take the stand of going out of the Union if a further extension of slavery were allowed.

One word before we leave the question of State Rights — each of the original colonies was repre-

sented by a star in the blue field of our national colors. The founders of the nation chose their emblem from the over-arching heavens. Shall we substitute in that field the waxing crescents of big commercial interests, or a milky way of dreamy, confused political theories? No, let us follow as our forefathers did the ways of Heaven and keep the stars of our flag undimmed in their original glory, revolving around the central sun, the Constitution, but each independent in its orbit.

And now a word as to slavery, which, although originally it had nothing whatsoever to do with the theory of State Rights, became its synonym with all its curse and universal condemnation. Yet in the early days slavery was recognized, North as well as South, as lawful; and the owner of a captured Pequot Indian in New England or a purchased African in the South had the protection of the law for the enjoyment of his slave property.

It is only fair to the South, which by a strange fate had to bear the ignominy of slavery and through secession to be the last indirect defender of its curse, to say that more than once in colonial days she tried to free herself from the abomination. The Virginia House of Burgesses passed twenty-three acts to prohibit the further import of slaves, and the King of England vetoed all of them; even South Carolina, as late as 1760, enacted a similar law against bringing in more slaves which the King

vetoed, so profitable was the degrading, pitiless slave trade to England's sordid commercial interest.

Again, when the Constitution was adopted its first draft provided for terminating the slave trade in 1800; an amendment was offered extending the time to 1808, and it was carried, every vote from the North for it, and all but one from the South against it. New England ships, like those of old England, were in the business; sailing out of Salem, Boston and Newport to the west coast of Africa to pack, in unspeakable cruelty, their between-decks with the poor creatures bought with rum and trinkets. The first English ship devoted to the slave trade was called the *Jesus*, and the first American, built at Marblehead, was named the *Desire*. What contrasts their names and their commerce suggest! It is unnecessary to state that enormous profits were made in the horrible traffic. Where was the New England conscience in those days? But let all this be as it may, long before the period dealt with in this biography two mighty and noble-browed advocates, Sympathy and Justice, had appealed in behalf of the poor slave to the heart of the world, and a movement backed by the finer instincts of our natures had set in to put an end to slavery. Virginia at an early day, under the influence of that appeal, came within one vote of abolishing the curse and shame, and many, like John Randolph of Roanoke, emancipated their slaves. Unfortunately for

Virginia and her sister States, that movement toward emancipation was checked by two causes and at last died out: first, an invention for clearing the cotton fibre from the seed thereby making slave labor very profitable; and second, resentment over the abuse and obloquy which opponents of slavery heaped on the slaveholder.

In the beginning, the condemnation of slavery was predicated on gentle and holy morals, but after the unnatural alliance of hate, obloquy and religion, the movement in the North changed rapidly into an inveterate crusade against slavery led on by what was known as the Abolition Party whose newspapers by 1838, the *Liberator*, *Emancipator*, *Philanthropist*, *National Enquirer* and *New York Evangelist* were reaching the homes of thousands in the North. It has long been observed that an issue involving a moral question, like that those periodicals were advocating, breeds bigoted radicals who through temperament invariably make everything personal and become, sooner or later, combative and abusive toward whoever challenges the wisdom of their views or refrains from joining in carrying them out.

A survey of those time-yellowing sheets will disclose that their columns were filled with sermons, addresses at conventions, editorials, and letters from farmers who tilled the rock-strewn winter-wind swept fields of New England, all breathing a ferocious

intolerance not only against slavery, but against the slaveholder himself; some going so far in their wrought-up state of mind as to suggest, approve and encourage an insurrection of the slaves. That the appalling Santo Domingo insurrection, when gray-haired, trembling old age, and babyhood in the cradle with its smiles and innocence were all left butchered, should not have drowned the cry of mercy in their natures, is simply astounding, for many were not only intelligent, but when not on the slavery question, reasonable and charitable.

The present generation can have only a faint notion of the intensity of the personal antipathy to slaveholders and aversion from the South generally by the members of the Abolition Party.

Naturally enough this antipathy was reciprocated with full measure of scorn and disdain by the slaveholder, and indeed by the poorest whites of the pineclad sand hills and swamps of the South.

Without a due appreciation of that long and deep-rooted aversion and estrangement of the sections, beginning, as we are convinced it did, away back in old England from a marked difference in the point of view of the part religion should play in social and governmental life, the conflict between the shrewdness of a commercial and the rustic simplicity of an agricultural life, and at last by that inborn hatred of aristocracy, intensified by the acknowledged and actual social and political preëminence of the South

— we say that without a full appreciation of all the above facts,— the War of the Rebellion will not, we fear, be fully understood, or the leaders, North and South, be duly, be fairly portrayed against the stormy background.

## CHAPTER IV

DAVIS' emergence from obscurity and the loneliness of the wilderness came about in this way. Two ambitious Whigs, owing to the overwhelming majorities cast by their party in Warren County, were candidates for a seat in the Mississippi legislature of 1843. The Democrats, encouraged by the rivalry between the Whigs, put a candidate in the field, but within a week of the election became dissatisfied with him and dropped him, and asked Davis to take his place. He accepted, and at once the Whigs, scenting danger, forced one of their candidates to withdraw and Davis, instead of leading followers inspired with prospective triumph, led a forlorn hope.

The Whigs, to make victory sure, called on Prentiss, the greatest orator of his day, and whose fame still lingers along the lower Mississippi like the glow on the clouds from a setting sun, to come to their aid. Moreover, they arranged for a joint debate between him and Davis, who had never made a political speech in his life. He was defeated as he expected to be, although he cut down materially the usual Whig majority. But he had held his own so well with the famous orator, that the next year

he was sent as a delegate to a Democratic state convention for the selection of a presidential candidate. He there made a speech in behalf of Calhoun, from whom as Secretary of War under Monroe he had received his appointment to West Point, that brought the convention to its feet with wild applause, and the same fall he was named an elector-at-large on the Polk and Dallas ticket. Davis canvassed the State from one end to the other and was elected. His readiness, breadth and clearness of view, augmented by a manifest sincerity and depth of conviction — he never harangued — and that charm of voice and manner that stayed with him to the end, so won the hearts, not only of the lank “crackers” in the piny woods, but those of his fellow cultivated planters, that in the following summer, 1845, they elected him by a vote of the State-at-large to Congress.

During the campaign the question of the payment of the bonds issued by the State for the stock of certain banks having split both parties, the leader of the Democratic party announced that no anti-repudiator should have his vote or influence, whereupon Davis wrote a pamphlet against repudiation.

His friends advised, implored him not to make it public, but he went at once to the repudiator leader, a Mr. Briscoe, and showed it to him. “Didn’t you know,” observed Briscoe, “I said I would not vote for any man holding these opinions?” “Yes,”



replied Davis, "and therefore I thought you ought to know mine."

That Briscoe in the end voted for him is not of importance, but in the light of this evidence we will leave it to any fair-minded man whether or not the charge made with trumpets, so to speak, against Davis when the Confederacy was trying to negotiate a loan in England, and reiterated long after the war was over by Roosevelt, the most frequent and shrillest crowing cock on the roost and off the roost, in politics of his day, was justified.

Of all the many charges brought against him not one ever struck deeper or wounded him more sorely; and again and again, as he trod the path of his old age, he protested and reprotected this honor-tainting accusation.

Before entering upon that campaign, Davis had become engaged to the daughter of W. B. Howell, whose plantation home was on a bluff near Natchez. Their acquaintance began while she was on a visit with his brother's family at "Hurricane," conducted thither by a warm friend of her father, Judge George Winchester, a distinguished lawyer, originally from Salem, Massachusetts, who had become a slaveholder like his fellow Northerners, Sergeant Prentiss of Maine, Gen. John J. Quitman of New York, and Robert J. Walker of Pennsylvania, leading spirits in the defense and rights of slavery and strong advocates of the annexation of Texas. But surely in

the judge's case, whatsoever might have been his Puritanic notions of slavery, a wide plantation on the Mississippi with cotton fields in bloom was a very different thing from a mournful hillside farm with its stunted cedars on Cape Ann. The judge, I have no doubt, fully appreciating the difference, luxuriated in the contrast and had no compunctions about the institution, sweetly as might his boyhood's memory cherish the church bells of Salem and the beams of Baker's Island lights in its harbor. But, in a contest between morals and wealth with its ease, distinction and freedom from care for a seat at the right hand of our conscience, the chances I think, and am sorry to say so, are heavy in favor of the latter; and yet I have no misgiving that the old judge was a right companionable, good-hearted New Englander, notwithstanding he turned slaveholder.

Here is the first letter of his charge, Miss Howell, to her mother. "Today Uncle Joe [Joseph Emory Davis] sent, by his younger brother [did you know he had one?] an urgent invitation to me to go at once to the 'Hurricane.' [She had stopped on her way at the plantation of Mrs. David McCaleb, Mr. Joseph Davis' eldest daughter.] I do not know whether this Mr. Jefferson Davis is young or old. He looks both at times; but I believe he is old, for from what I hear he is only two years younger than you are. He impresses me as a remarkable kind of man, but of uncertain temper, and has a way of

taking for granted that everybody agrees with him when he expresses an opinion, which offends me; yet he is most agreeable and has a peculiarly sweet voice and a winning manner of asserting himself. The fact is, he is the kind of person I should expect to rescue one from a mad dog at any risk, but to insist upon a stoical indifference to the fright afterward. I do not think I shall ever like him as I do his brother Joe. Would you believe it, he is refined and cultivated, and yet a Democrat!"

Having been born and bred a Democrat this surprise of the Whig miss over Jeff's refinement and cultivation "and yet a Democrat!" brings a smile. For all that, those discerning young eyes had not failed to note the one main weakness in his character, namely, taking it for granted that whosoever had thought the matter out as he had thought it out must have reached the same conclusion as he had reached. It was a trait, notwithstanding the good breeding with which it was manifested, that she did not like, nor did any of his political adversaries ever like. But in this connection let me venture to say that tenacity and obstinacy of opinion are distinctively a product of the wilderness, as well as the solitude of a cloistral life at a university, or social isolation. Men who have reached conclusions under such conditions are, as a rule, willful and unmanageable; Mr. Lincoln — Davis' reverse historic counterpart — was no exception to this rule; for

with equal pertinacity he held to his opinions, but he was vastly more sagacious in their presentation and defense.

In the spring of 1845, Jefferson Davis and Miss Howell were married at her home in Natchez; and when Davis took the boat at Vicksburg with his faithful servant, James Pemberton, for the wedding, lo! who should be aboard but General Taylor on his way to New Orleans to take command of the troops destined for the Mexican border. Davis had not seen or heard from him since he left Prairie du Chien some ten years gone by and keen was his pleasure when Taylor greeted him with spontaneous cordiality; and as they journeyed on, their old-time relations of mutual regard and esteem were resumed.

The good angels are near nations and individuals when, under reconciliation's gracious powers, the warm hand is reached out again and the eye beams again with the old-time friendship.

This interview with Taylor must have made the day doubly happy for Davis, and I have no doubt his heart was lighter therefor as he reached the door of his bride's plantation home, its servants in their best bib and tucker, the air filled with the fragrance of the wild grape, yellow jessamine and magnolia.

Late that autumn, Davis and his wife, who had soft, liquid, dark eyes, a voice of Southern charm and was a ready, pleasing talker, went to Washington and on December 8, 1845, he took his seat in Congress.

## CHAPTER V

As I have taken, in the preceding pages, some pains to set forth Jefferson Davis' surroundings on the plantation, convinced that in his case and that of every man who makes a mark in the world, they leave indelible traces of their handiwork in intellectual development and are the sources of certain fadeless lines in character, I shall dwell for a moment on his new surroundings and some of the issues engrossing the attention of Congress.

There were four great figures masterful in mind, personality and achievement with whom he was brought face to face, John Quincy Adams, Clay, Webster and Calhoun. In the eyes of Davis, Calhoun was easily the greatest, but from the viewpoint of historic perpetuity he now stands off and alone from them all in the deep shadow that slavery cast; while Clay, on the contrary, stands in the warm beams of a life-long desire to reconcile the sections, Adams in the perpetual light that is shed from his diary, and Webster in that of his vision of the Union's glorified destiny, a vision that rallied the forces of the North to accept the challenge for its disruption and with a result that we all know.

In Congress and the Cabinet were many able,

strong men. Seward whose fame will last welded as it is to Lincoln's, Giddings of Ohio, the Abolition champion with glowing white teeth and defiant personal courage; Chase and Toombs both handsome, large, striking men who were destined alike to life-long disappointed ambition, — Chase to be the leader of the North instead of Lincoln, Toombs the presidency of the Confederacy instead of Davis, — Crittenden, the venerable, well-bred gentleman of Kentucky, Winthrop of Massachusetts wearing her mantle of social and intellectual aristocracy, Stephens of Georgia, and many others who played mighty parts in the Rebellion. What a contrast to the quiet loneliness and undisputed sway of a plantation on the Mississippi!

Mrs. Davis in her Memoirs throws this light upon the outset of her husband's Congressional life. "He visited very little, studied until two or three o'clock in the morning, and, with my assistance, did all his writing, franking documents, letters, etc." This would seem to indicate that he did not trust to the inspiration of the moment to discuss a question in Congress.

She further says that the only one he visited beside old army friends, was Calhoun, and as we know, by following in his steps they led him to Calhoun's place in the leadership of the South and at last to manacles at Fort Monroe.

Early in that session he made a speech, but not a

long one, on the Oregon boundary issue. Savage, a newspaper reporter and author, says of it that when Davis began his speech, —and we easily catch the vibrant tones of his carrying voice, — Southern friends of mine who heard him often have told me they were a combination of the trumpet and harp — Adams drew near him for it was his habit to listen carefully to the first set speech of a new member, apparently to discover if it were worth while for him to pay attention the next time the speaker had the floor. "At the close of the speech," goes on Savage, "Adams crossed over to some friends and said, 'That young man, gentlemen, is no ordinary man. He will make his mark yet, mind me.' "

The country at that time was in high fever, from one end to the other, over the admission of Texas by joint resolution of Congress after a prolonged debate marked with sustained earnestness and extreme acrimony; for slavery, as usual, was at the fore and charged with reaching out, as in the Louisiana Purchase, for more territory to increase her power in the national councils; when, as a matter of fact, as Time's outgoing tide has revealed, it was not slavery, but the Genius of our country making her way to the Pacific in fulfillment of her preordained destiny yet meeting a furious New England's resistance at every step.

Adams, who led the opposition to the annexation of Texas, angered over defeat, prophesied that it

would be the death of the Union. He is in his grave, and, lo! today his New England's cotton mills rejoice as they spin Texas cotton, and the country's ships, propelled by Texas oil, sail proudly bearing the products of their looms across the sea.

The fires of this discussion over slavery were still smoking when up flamed a long-smoldering dispute with Great Britain over the Oregon boundary. Both countries were in bad humor. Parliament had voted unanimously on a call from Peel for supplies to get ready for conflict, and the people beyond the Alleghenies were longing to cross swords with England.

"Unfortunately," said Davis at the beginning of his speech, "the opinion has gone forth that no politician dared to be the advocate of peace when the question of war is mooted. That will be an evil hour — when it shall be in the power of any demagogue or fanatic to raise a war clamor and control the legislation of the country. The evils of war must fall upon the people, and with them the war feeling should originate. We, their representatives, are but a mirror to reflect the light, and never should become a torch to fire the pile."

He then went on and discussed — and we think ably and fairly — the reasonableness of the claims of the disputed boundary lines, recommending, however strong our case might be theoretically, yet in view of all the consequences, we should accede



to an honorable compromise. As slavery had been thrust into the discussion, as in all questions of a national character after the rise of the Abolition Party, and the usual sheet lightning had flashed from the low-down war-gathering cloud of the sections, Davis before he closed, touched the chords that bound the Union; how in the hearts of North and South the names of the battlefields of the Revolution were mingled in pride and affection, and exclaimed. "What Southern man would wish it less by one of the Northern names of which it is composed? Or where is he, gazing on the obelisk, [referring to Bunker Hill Monument] that rises from the ground made sacred by the blood of Warren, would feel his patriot's pride suppressed by local jealousy? Type of the men, the event, the purpose it commemorates . . . pointing like a finger to the sources of noblest thought, a beacon of freedom, it guides the present generation to contemplate the scene where Massachusetts and Virginia, as stronger brothers of the family, stood foremost to defend our common rights." This reference to the monument overlooking Boston must have pleased Adams.

It is not my purpose or desire to encumber this narrative with speeches, but this one reveals what I believe to be the real Jefferson Davis, a man of moral courage, of standards far above the level of the demagogue and fanatic, and gifted with a rare ornament, namely, a mind where reason and imagi-

nation both play around the subjects that appeal to it.

The speech, which has just been referred to, was made on the sixth of February, and in May he was appointed on a committee empowered to ask for State papers and reports on some outrageous charges against Webster in the use of secret funds while Secretary of State under Tyler, alleging that not only had he used those funds to corrupt the press, but was a "delinquent and defaulter" to the sum of over five thousand dollars.

This scandalous resolution, to the disgrace of Congress, was carried by a vote of one hundred thirty-six yeas to twenty-eight nays. But, we must remember that Webster loomed as a candidate of the Whigs for the next presidency, that greatness breeds envy, and that in both parties there are always shoals of cheap, shifty politicians. There was no lack of them in the Democratic party, who, for political advantage, were base enough to hope the committee's report, which was practically written by Davis, although if it in the main should exonerate Webster yet by implication would leave a stain. The night before the committee reported, one of them went to see Davis and hinted that he hoped it would not "white-wash" Webster. Davis fired up over the dishonorable suggestion, and said, "No one could deprecate his [Webster's] policy more than I do," but, that he would not make a

false and partisan report, or parley with his sense of justice and honor.

Webster, after the finding was submitted exonerating him completely, went to see Davis and expressed in warm terms his appreciation of the manly way he had dealt with the matter. Later he called on Mrs. Davis and invited them to visit him at Marshfield.

As the spirits of the dead in their transcendent rest are free from all mortality's bickerings, I am fain to believe that Webster's met that of Davis with a warm hand at the end of its upward flight, for as Bacon says, "The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath."

Not long after this report on the Webster charges, a resolution of thanks to Taylor and his men for victories won over Mexican forces on the Texas border was offered in Congress. Davis made a fervent speech in its favor, saying that, as a friend of the Army, his heart rejoiced that there was a disposition in the House to deal justly and generously with the defenders of the country's colors; that too often and too long had they had to listen to harsh and invidious reflections on the Army and the accomplished officers who commanded it; that now, as an American, his heart in response to whatsoever illustrates our national character or adds glory to the name, rejoiced at the recent triumphs. Yet it was no more than he expected, or when occasions

offer, it would achieve again. And then in fine strain he went on, — "It was the triumph of American courage, professional skill, and that patriotic pride which blooms in the breast of every educated soldier,"—a simile that must have been pleasing to the ear of his stern old Alma Mater on the Hudson, and as one of his fellow graduates, it pleases my ear too.

Davis, continuing his speech, spoke of a bastioned field work and how, through the science of its construction, it had stood bombardment practically harmless while its fire had crumbled the stone walls of Matamoras; and then, turning to a member of the House, who had denounced the Academy and its graduates, made an ill-fated and unmitigated blunder by asking him if he believed a blacksmith or a tailor could have secured like results.

Now it so happened that the Congressman who had made the charges and had been a blacksmith — but Davis did not know it — retorted, not angrily, being blessed with a genial temper, but well, saying in effect, that the days when he was the companion of the blazing forge and the ringing anvil were proud days, and moreover that General Greene of Revolutionary fame had been a blacksmith also. Andrew Johnson, however, Lincoln's successor in the Presidency, who had been a tailor in his youth and had had to fight his way up against a domineering class founded on wealth and family, fretting under Davis' unwarrantable yet unintentional aspersion, rose the

next day and gritted out: "He knew we had an illegitimate, swaggering, bastard, scrub aristocracy who assumed to know a great deal, but when the flimsy veil of pretension was torn from it, was shown to possess neither talents nor information," and declaring that when a blow was struck upon the class he had sprung from, "either direct or by innuendo, he would resent it."

Davis, in reply, said with deep earnestness that his reference to the tailor and the blacksmithing trades was wholly, wholly misunderstood, that he merely wanted to show that an education, either by teaching or by experience was necessary in every professional career and that once for all he would say, "that if he knew himself, he was incapable of wantonly wounding the feelings or of making invidious reflections upon the origin or occupation of any man." But all to no avail, so far as Johnson was concerned; his feelings had been hurt, and in all likelihood it was not the first time by the speech or bearing of some of his Southern colleagues, not one of whom, by the way, had in combination of manner, tone and ability more of the aristocrat than Davis.

Yet, how truly and thoroughly this controversial incident, so unexpected and unhappy, illustrates a trait in human nature, namely, that the composure of a man sure of his station, born with a certain austerity of manner and gifted with power of easy

and telling speech, always shoots a chilliness that provokes combative mediocrity whose chief weapons are obloquy and reproach. That was Davis' misfortune, and although he was without a single affectation or lacking a heart for the warmest friendships, yet his combination of fine manners, cool self-control and certain dignity that stood off unwarranted familiarity, was the source of much of the hatred which neither punishment nor death appeased.

I have said that his blunder in bringing in the blacksmith and the tailor was ill-fated. What I had in mind was this — its probable contribution in establishing Johnson's final antagonism to the Confederacy which made East Tennessee practically loyal, and by its appeal for defense from the North threatened the life of the Confederacy at every stage of its four years' struggle.

Well, Andrew Johnson is buried among the steadfast friends of his obscure youth, and the mountains of East Tennessee with their blooming laurel and moon-glittering tumbling streams proudly stand guard in majestic silence over his and the graves of them all — those who fought for the South and those who laid down their lives for the North — and strangely enough, before death overtook him the party whom he had opposed, in its vindictive pursuit of political booty, hated him as they hated Davis, and thus at last the humble tailor and the aristocratic planter met on the same level.

Whatever hold that unfortunate clash with Johnson may have had on Davis' mind was quickly broken by the United States declaring war on Mexico, and the arrival soon thereafter of a special messenger notifying him that he had been chosen Colonel of the First Mississippi Rifles, who had enlisted at once on the call for volunteers.

Davis gladly accepted the Colonelcy, and after securing for his regiment the best arm of the day, the Whitney gun, set off for Vicksburg, pursuing his way by stage over the Alleghenies. June, with her sunshine dome, daisies, green leaves and gently drifting clouds was living her day of matchless charm.

A family council including James Pemberton was held, at which it was decided that James should stay at home and look after the plantation and Mrs. Davis. That settled, Davis selected an Arabian from his stables, and with Jim Green, one of his brother's people for servant in Pemberton's place, set off to join his regiment in camp at New Orleans.

Within a few days the regiment sailed and landed on a sandy beach not far from Point Isabel on the coast of Texas, where Davis at once began to drill his men and conduct schools of instruction for commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Subsequently they moved to Comargo on the Rio Grande.

While in camp some of his men raided a corn


field, the ears in full silk offering a sweet change from the army ration of hard tack and bacon. Davis, on hearing of the wreck of the poor settler's field, was deeply provoked and at once assembled the men, rebuking them sharply for their conduct, admonishing them that war against an enemy did not allow the despoiling or destruction of private property, and warning them that henceforth any violation of this rule would meet with severe punishment. The damages his men had done he paid out of his own pocket to the farmer.

In this connection it may with propriety, we think, be recorded, that not a single article or trophy of any kind was brought home by the men of his regiment; moreover, all the venerable bejewelled tinsels of churches and cathedrals were left untouched, and we dare say that if these old-time revered objects of devotion with their strings of pearls, rubies and diamonds could speak, they would testify with subdued, fervent gratitude to this fact, at least so far as the First Mississippi Rifles were concerned. What a contrast to the conduct of some of our men in the Civil War and the Germans in the World War, lugging home family treasures, silverware, pictures, and what not!

Surely Jefferson Davis' record in the Mexican War, so far as dealing with individual enemies and observing their rights was concerned, brought no



shame to his country, and we believe that the old flag he followed in those days would declare with pride that it had no memory in its folds of a single act by him unbecoming a soldier and a gentleman.



## CHAPTER VI

IN August General Taylor, to whom Davis had reported and by whom he had been received with heartiness, set his forces in motion for Monterey some hundred miles distant at a gap in the Mexican mountains. After four or five hot days' march through a desolation of sand, chaparral and bayonet cactus that gave away at last to smiling fields and hills clothed in green, they reached the little town of Marin, and from one of its belfries they could see across an intervening, undulating valley some twenty-odd miles wide, the gilded crosses of the Cathedral of Monterey.

The dreamy old town, with a population of ten or more thousand, and embowered with fig, lemon, orange and pomegranate trees, lay at the mouth of a pass through the Sierra Madres on the main road to the City of Mexico. Its streets were swept by artillery posted and protected by barricades where they crossed each other; and the square one-storied houses of solid masonry, with a court in the center and iron-barred windows, had flat roofs with parapets made of sand bags for infantry. On both sides of the pass above the town there were fieldworks, and fortified stone structures called

castles, flying the green, white and red banner of Mexico. In the suburbs, at the lower end of the town, were several small works, and a little farther along on the bank of the river was a large grove of pecan and live oaks into whose shade, after the capture, some of the weary storming troops retired with their riddled, victorious colors. Beyond the town limits in the north and standing alone, was a fort known as the Black Fort, with four salients providing for eight guns each, walls very strong and high surrounded by a deep ditch and enclosing two or more acres.

After resting a few days they drew near to Monterey and Taylor sent George Gordon Meade, the hero of Gettysburg, who in figure, bearing and temperament was very like Davis, to conduct Worth with his division off to the right and attack the batteries and detached works guarding the pass through the mountains. This was on a Sunday forenoon and Worth and his soldiers could hear the bells of the Cathedral ringing for morning service, their soft tones wafting over the line of his march. He reached his position about twilight and went into bivouac.

The next morning, to make a diversion in favor of Worth who had attacked with valor at an early hour, Garland's Brigade, chiefly of Regulars and the Washington and Baltimore Battalions of Militia, and very gallant men they were, assailed the lower

end of the town. Garland soon came under a heavy artillery fire from works not only directly in his front, but also on his right and rear from Black Fort, and on his left from Fort Taneria. He was repulsed with a death toll that was heavy, and among the dead were the grandsons of two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, showing that their forefathers' courageous blood was still running.

Quitman, commanding Davis' brigade was then ordered up and the First Mississippi Rifles and the First Tennessee attacked Fort Taneria. After suffering much from artillery and musketry fire, they stormed and broke through, Davis abreast in going over the works and in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. On reaching the gate of a fortified building they forced it open and its commanding officer surrendered his sword to Davis.

Meanwhile Butler's division had gone to the support of Garland and met with like fortune, whereupon the Mexican cavalry massed behind the Black Fort hurried out to charge the broken infantry. Davis who had been sent to Butler's aid, arrived just in time to take position as a rear guard for the broken battalions, and seeing the oncoming cavalry, faced his regiment about and advanced against them. In the engagement that followed, he repulsed the cavalry, saving the lives of many of our limping, bleeding wounded. Albert Sidney Johnston in talking

with his son long after Monterey, gave Davis the highest praise for his conduct.

The next day and the next the American forces renewed the attack, fighting from house to house, and from all accounts Davis showed great personal bravery. One circumstance is worthy of mention: a young Mexican officer was urging his men on with much gallantry when one of Davis' men levelled his rifle on him. Davis exclaimed, "Do not shoot him!" The brave fellow's life was spared.

The next morning the Mexican general Ampudia, of French descent and born in the West Indies, asked for terms of surrender. Taylor having selected Davis for one of the Commissioners to carry out the terms of surrender, named an hour and place for a conference. An officer who accompanied Davis to the meeting says that Ampudia was in full uniform, all courtesy, big speeches, abundance of shrugs, nods, alternate smiles and frowns, in short, manifesting the whole gamut of intercourse common to Frenchmen. Taylor, on the contrary, was dumb, dressed in his best coat that looked as though it had been through a dozen campaigns, a glazed oil-cloth cap, an old-fashioned white vest and had the appearance of an aged farmer elected to a military command. When Ampudia had got through boasting about the number of troops he had and how he and they would die in their tracks, etc., Taylor cocked his head a little to one side and, gently

raising his grizzly eyebrows so that the dauntless little black eyes lurking beneath them might fall directly upon the animated Mexican, said coolly: "General Ampudia, we came here to take Monterey, and we are going to do it on such terms as please us. I wish you good morning," and off he went leaving Davis and his colleagues to settle the terms. In the end Davis wrote them and they were generous, too generous, as it turned out, to suit the politicians in Washington, and Taylor was ordered to revoke them; but owing to the long distance the messenger had to travel they had about expired before his arrival. Taylor, very naturally was indignant, and felt he had been dealt with unfairly; thereupon Davis came to his defense and his colleagues joined with him.

Mrs. Davis unwell, and affairs on the plantation — although James had done his best— unsatisfactory and worrying, the Colonel got a leave of absence and went home, taking with him his war horse Tartar which had shown intelligence and spirit under fire.

Before returning to the Army, Davis made his will, and consulted James whom he wished to set free, as to its provisions in case of his death. James said that he would prefer to take care of Mrs. Davis while she lived, but wanted his freedom at the end of her life, and the will was so framed with a bequest of land or money as he might choose.

On the expiration of his leave of absence he left

Tartar and took Richard, a bay with black points, and rejoined the Army. The battle of Buena Vista was fought shortly after his return, a battle against vastly superior numbers, and every history of that engagement will tell you Davis with his Mississippi Rifles did as much if not more to win that great victory than any other single command, although there was conspicuous fortitude and bravery displayed by regulars and volunteers on all parts of the bitterly contested field.

Early in the action he was wounded seriously in the right foot just below the instep, the ball driving a part of his spur and stocking into the wound, but he did not leave the field till it was won. His boot had to be cut from his foot and all that night a friend, Captain Eustis, kept a stream of cold water pouring over the wound. The next morning when it was rumored that the enemy was about to renew the battle, Davis ordered that he be carried out to the head of his regiment, but during the night the enemy drew away silently; for two years Davis was on crutches, the bone of his foot exfoliating from time to time.

Many, many gallant men fell at Buena Vista and among them Hardin, McKee and Clay, a son and namesake of the great patriot Henry Clay. He had been a year at West Point with Davis and when the latter first met his father in Washington, on reëntering Congress, Clay said: "My poor boy

usually occupied about one-half of his letters home in praising you."

Taylor in his official report said: "The Mississippi Rifles under Colonel Davis were highly conspicuous for their gallantry and steadiness. Brought into action against an immense, superior force, they maintained themselves for a long time unsupported. Colonel Davis, though severely wounded, remained in the saddle until the close of the action."

Davis' regiment's term of service having expired and the time having come for its departure, he drew it up in front of General Taylor to say good-bye. The old General exclaimed almost choked with emotion, "Go on boys — go on — I can't speak."

On its arrival at New Orleans it received a great welcome, and there were many manifestations of joy and pride as the boat made its way up the river to Vicksburg and home.

Davis had hardly reached his plantation when, owing to the death of a senator from Mississippi, the Governor, Albert Gallatin Brown, appointed him to fill the vacancy and on crutches in December, pale and emaciated, he took his seat in the Senate.



## CHAPTER VII

ALTHOUGH the Mexican War was over, and over victoriously, when Davis entered the Senate, yet the storm of passion aroused by it had not died down, so deeply enraged were the foes of slavery, who, day in and day out, continued to denounce it as a war, not waged in the defense of the country's honor or rights, but for the conquest of new territory for the extension of slavery. So, when Webster in discussing a bill for the increase of the regular army declared it was an odious war, this epithet brought Davis to his feet, and naturally enough, for did not the crutches at his side call on him to resent the imputation?

"Odious for what?" he asked — and we see the blaze in his blue-gray eyes and we hear his melodious voice keyed with impelling fervor — "Is it odious on account of the skill and gallantry with which it has been conducted, or because of the humanity, the morality, the magnanimous clemency which have marked its execution? Where is the odium? Where are the evils brought upon us by this 'odious' war? Where can you point to any inroad upon our prosperity, public or private, industrial, commercial or financial which, in any degree, can be attributed to the prosecution of this war?"

While this warm, offhand reply did not go to the root of the matter as it lay in Webster's mind, yet having participated in that war, forbidden plundering and having written the generous terms for the capitulation of Monterey, it would have been pusillanimous in Davis to have sat there and kept his silence.

Relative to slavery during that and subsequent sessions, he said in defence of the South that it had inherited and not instituted slavery, that it had recognition in the voice of the Constitution itself as an element in society and the nation's political body, that its extension into the territories did not add a single soul to its numbers; that during its existence in the South the slaves had risen to a higher level in intelligence than elsewhere in the world, and that between them and their masters had grown home ties of affection independent of color; that the mere fact of ownership neither established inhumanity, obliterated a single one of the native feelings, debauched the standard of good citizenship or loyalty to the Republic's ideals in the owner of slaves in the South any more than it did in the holder of slaves while slavery existed in New England and New York. He recognized and regretted that the antithetical use of the terms freedom and slavery as applied to parties had had a powerful influence in forming the adverse opinion of the world — for the word "freedom" was sweet

and "slavery" repugnant — as against any claim the South might make for its rights under the Constitution, or measures for its safety of life or property from insurrection. To the last he held that, to whatever extent the question of slavery may have served as the occasion, it was really not the heart of the conflict between the Confederacy and the Federal Government.

In this connection we will venture to observe, that whosoever delves into the history of those bygone days so inflamed with bitterness of speech will discover neither bluster nor intemperate language by Mr. Davis in stating or defending his views on slavery, State Rights and public policy, or a single failure to treat his opponents with the utmost courtesy. We are quite sure, also, he will find no instance when Davis descended to the level of the demagogue; for, if ever a public man's life was built up around sincerity, that of Jefferson Davis can lay claim to the tribute.

During this same tempestuous session, what is known as the Clay Compromise between North and South on the question of slavery was passed. Davis spoke against it, voted against it, and we think he was wrong. But he claimed that it practically denied the South its rights and, by its prohibition of slavery in the District of Columbia, it virtually committed the Government to the assumption of power to destroy slavery whenever it saw fit. If it

could so deal with that wrong, it could and would deal with whatsoever might be called thereafter a national wrong. We think, in view of the power the Government now exercises over the property as well as the habits of its citizens, he not only had logic on his side but prophecy also with her fulfilling eye. But if I had to choose in behalf of mankind between emotion that stirred Clay's heart and logic that ruled Davis, for a guide to the field of progress and great deeds, I should choose emotion.

Let all this be as it may, there was an incident during the heated debate which is worth recording. Near the end of the discussion during which the venerable Union-loving Clay had made heart-reaching, eloquent appeals in favor of the measure, he turned toward Davis and said, "Allow me to say to the Senators from the South and to my friend from Mississippi, if he will allow me to apply that expression to him, which I do with most profound truth and sincerity, for he is not only my friend, but he was also the friend of one who is no more." Overcome by emotion, Clay could not speak and bowing his head, whitened with the snow of age, his eyes were seen to fill with tears; after regaining control he went on.

When Davis secured the floor some hours later, early in his speech he said: "I did not, however," referring to some phase in the debate, "intend to arraign in an offensive sense the consistency of my

friend from Kentucky, as I am permitted to call him. I not only accepted the appellation when he applied it to me, I accepted it gratefully and I felt the remarks which came from him in a suppressed voice more deeply than I can express. Between us there is a tie of old memories, an association running back to boyhood days, near and dear, and consecrated so that death alone can ever sever it. It is one which he well knows and I can never forget."

Critics! condemners of Jefferson Davis, may I ask you to read this scene over? There is much, you will agree, of our common human nature in it, much that moves that vibrating chord which binds us all, which tenderly binds you to me, reader.

There was another event that summer after Congress adjourned, which we think throws some light on the kind of man Davis was, and which Carlisle says should be the main aim and endeavor of a biographer to discover. It was this: the Whigs nominated Taylor and the Democrats Lewis Cass — a patriot if ever there was one and a warm friend of Davis — for the presidency. He was now confronted by devotion to party on the one hand and by the ties that bound him to Taylor on the other — was not his first wife Taylor's daughter, and had he not shared with him the dangers of the battlefield, dangers that develop a tie that may grow old but never breaks — ? The outcome of his deliberation was to remain loyal to his party's nominee,

but not to enter the campaign in his behalf. When, however, zealous Democrats attacked his old commanding officer he came out boldly in his defense, showing that strong as was the hold of party on him stronger was that of justice and friendship.

And now a word as to how he passed his time when not in the Senate.

Mrs. Davis in her Memoirs says that he came home night after night tired out and then from dusk devoted himself to a late hour, and often to nearly daylight, getting ready for the next day's work; that his health, never robust since wounded in Mexico, so interfered with social duties that he took little or no part in the gayeties of society, although from time to time he would ask his very intimate political and old army friends to dine with him. In my youth in the field I met old officers who had been at his table, and, although they were fighting against him, they spoke of his graciousness, natural charm, and how his face would light up radiantly with the spirit of comradeship.

When Congress adjourned Davis went home, but not to quiet, for the people of Mississippi were in a political ferment, lining up for the election in September of delegates to a convention called by the Legislature for the consideration of Federal relations; in other words, to approve or disapprove of the Clay Compromise. While this canvass was going on the regular parties, Whig and Democrat,

nominated candidates for Governor to be elected in November. The Whigs, who in the main approved the Compromise, had nominated Foote; and the Democrats, Quitman, who at heart, although born in the North, longed to break with it.

Foote, with whom Davis had had a serious controversy in the Senate, ending with a mutual antipathy that lasted as long as they lived, was an able man, but at times outrageous in his language in debate, entered upon the campaign with almost savage delight. From county seat to county seat he went haranguing, frequently challenging Davis to meet him, and excoriating Quitman unmercifully. The election of delegates in favor of the Compromise was an overwhelming victory for him and the Union party, chiefly Whigs. Quitman, whom Foote had literally slashed into shreds, withdrew in utter disgust and loathing from the contest for governor; thereupon the Democrats called upon Davis to lead their bewildered party.

At that time he was confined to a darkened room, suffering with a diseased left eye that ultimately lost its sight entirely. However, he yielded to the call, resigned his Senatorship and, walking back and forth in his dark room, dictated his stand on the issues, declaring that he had never advocated the dissolution of the Union, that the time for secession had not come, and, if ever, then only as a last alternative, and as soon as he was able, set out to

make the best canvass he could in the few weeks that remained.

The election went against him, but he reduced the majority of more than seven thousand that had been cast at the delegate election, to less than a thousand. That this defeat was a sore disappointment we have no doubt; not only had he sacrificed a position of honor that he had craved and enjoyed, but had been defeated by a man he despised. His resignation of the Senatorship to go into this campaign had ill-starred issue in this, that, it identified him thenceforth with the Southern radicals with whom he was not in full sympathy, and who were for dissolving the Union at once, he only as a last alternative.

This step indicates his sense of political obligation to the party that had bestowed its honors upon him, a delicate fastidiousness of the proprieties of official life, and a keen oversensitiveness as to what touched his motives and policies, a trait in his character that is never found in dictators. From a worldly point of view, the Confederacy might have gained here and there an advantage had he been less sensitive, shrewder and more compliant; but, while nature in gathering his clay had been bountiful in her gifts to address the mind and put the torch to enthusiasm, she forgot — or disdained — to give him a faculty to deceive, to purr to the vanity of the mighty, or to greet with a factitious smile and



familiarity the always ambitious and oftentimes vulgar politicians that pack the ranks of mediocrity. In this connection as illustrative of the kind of man he was, on one occasion in the Senate, he said: "I wish now merely to add that what my heart tells me is right, no casuistry can prevail upon me not to do, or to do that which I believe to be wrong."

We have wondered, more than once, what the fate of the Confederacy would have been had it had a leader of a different type. Would it have succeeded? we hear some one ask. O, no! Entangled in slavery's inextricable net, it was doomed to defeat sooner or later let its leader have been the shrewdest of mortals. In view of its heroic life, although ill-starred, it was better, it was far better, we think, to have had a leader such as he was, a man with high standards of public and private life, a stainless character, a tongue gifted with eloquence and a heart of indomitable courage. Every nation at some period in its life furnishes material for drama and I am glad that in the life of the Confederacy there is so much of a high, inspiring character.

After the election he betook himself to the rejuvenescence of his plantation which, due to his long absence and the death of the faithful James Pemberton, had become unfruitful and begun to wear the forlorn look of neglect. By his ever contagious spirit he quickly inspired new zeal in the gangs picking cotton and harvesting the crops, for it was

autumn and they were ripe; and when not in the fields with the hands, devoted himself to the grounds about the house, for they, among all the accessories of an estate as we well know, are the first to show the decline of prosperity.

His wife says they worked together looking after ornamental blooming shrubs, cultivating roses in the garden, of which he was very proud, and one day they planted a little live oak that thrived so well that when she wrote her book it spread a shade of over ninety feet. So passed those autumn days, the buoyant magnolia glorying in her bursting carmine seeds, the clustered purple asters and golden-rod in bloom, and the primeval woods basking in the dreamy Indian summer silence, days that in the eyes of the gray-haired wife, after the storm and wreck were over, lay like a lost Eden in the dreary past.

Meanwhile Davis' friend, Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, had been elected President and one day there came a letter from him asking Davis to a place in his Cabinet. Mrs. Davis, dreading a change, entreated him not to accept, and he declined the honor. Pierce, sorely disappointed, for Davis had had a warm place in his heart for many a day, hoped he would at least come on to his inauguration. Davis, yielding as throughout his life to the pleas of lifelong friendships, went to Washington; Pierce renewed his request, backed earnestly by leaders of

the party, a call that always had something of the stir and rallying appeal of a bugle on a battlefield for him, for he was a strong party man, and Davis accepted the position of Secretary of War.

## CHAPTER VIII

Of all the politically lordly places in the Cabinet not one could have had for Davis the same inherent distinction or duties so agreeable as that of the Secretary of War. It gave him not only the opportunity to render valuable services in behalf of the Nation's defence but also to enhance the welfare and efficiency of his boyhood's profession, the Army he loved.

With his natural diligence and enthusiasm he threw himself into the performance of his duties. He urged and succeeded in increasing the Army's numbers and its pay; he replaced the old smooth-bore muskets by the best modern rifles; caused the revision of the tactics and Army regulations; strengthened the seacoast defences and gave to Rodman, the father of all modern high-power cannon, every help and encouragement while carrying on his still fruit-bearing experiments. It was my fortune to serve with this truly distinguished officer during and after the war, and he never failed to speak of Davis' wide knowledge of every science, his readiness to listen, his uniform courtesy and charm of manner; and, while his office room in the War Department had an unmistakable atmosphere of

dignity, yet there was none of the usual chill and meticulous fussiness that pervade so many of our self-conscious military headquarters.

Davis ordered surveys for transcontinental roads to facilitate the assemblage of troops on the Pacific coast, recommended the establishment of post schools, sent a commission to report on the conduct of the Crimean War and gave especial attention not only to the betterment of officers' quarters at West Point where Lee was superintendent, but also and above all established at the Academy a department of ethics with a view to extending and elevating the merely professional education into fields of philosophy, history and literature, thus giving an officer those intellectual acquirements befitting his position as a representative of his country. He tells us that he was led to this addition to the course of study by deficiencies he had felt in his association with men of wider university education. It was during his administration that Weir painted the picture over the chancel in the old chapel. On the left of the legend, "Righteousness exalteth a nation but Sin is a reproach to any people," stands a thoughtful Roman soldier, his hand resting on a stand of lictors, and on the right of the legend the figure of Peace with her heaven-lit face uplifted and in her hand an olive branch. In that picture is the sublimation of the ideals of the hero and noble warrior, the embodiment of the spirit of old West

Point worshipping with the Cadets. A copy should occupy a like place over the chancel in the new chapel.

No graduate, we are fain to believe, ever held his Alma Mater in deeper love than Jefferson Davis, whose wearied mind, when he lay on his last sick bed and death very near, winged its way back to her, and he said to his wife, to whom he was dictating his autobiography: "I have not told what I wish to say of my classmates Sidney Johnston and Polk [the venerable bishop killed on Lone Mountain]; I have much more to say about them. I shall tell a great deal of West Point, and I seem to remember more every day." Sweet, like inflowing brooks from meadows green, are old memories, but let us return to the narrative's main channel.

It had been customary in those days of political spoils, upon a change of administration, to make removals of clerkships to satisfy party workers. Now it so happened that the Chief Clerk of the War Department who, by long experience, had peculiar qualifications, had been removed by Davis' predecessor, and although known to Davis officially only, he replaced him in his old position. Again, and illustrative of his ideas as to civil service, the Quartermaster-General needing a clerk sent him a list arranged according to his judgment as to merit; Davis gave the appointment to No. 1; within a few days a delegation of Democratic Congressmen called

on him and wanted to know whether it was true that he had appointed a Whig to a position in the War Department. He replied, "Certainly not." Whereupon, pleased at the brightening prospect, the delegation observed that they thought he had not been aware of it and proceeded to inform him that the clerk he had appointed was a Whig, etc.

Davis listened to them patiently, and when they were through told them in his usual respectful tones and manner that they had been misinformed, that he had appointed not a Whig but a clerk, No. 1 on a merit list that had been submitted by the head of the bureau; and, moreover, that while he was in office, merit and not politics would be his rule in all such cases.

Of course this was not satisfactory to the Congressmen, but all high-minded men of today will agree that it was creditable to Davis. Here is what Carl Schurz in his *Reminiscences* has to say about him:

"The first call I made was at the War Department, to present my letter of introduction to the Secretary, Mr. Jefferson Davis. Being respectful, even reverential, by natural disposition, I had in my imagination formed a high idea of what a grand personage the War Minister of this great Republic must be. I was not disappointed. He received me graciously. His slender, tall, and erect figure, his spare face, keen eyes, and fine forehead, not broad, but high

and well shaped, presented the well-known strong American type. There was in his bearing a dignity which seemed entirely natural and unaffected — that kind of dignity which does not invite familiar approach, but will not render one uneasy by lofty assumption. His courtesy was without any condescending air. Our conversation confined itself to the conventional commonplace. A timid attempt on my part to elicit from him an opinion on the phase of the slavery question brought about by the introduction of the Nebraska Bill did not meet with the desired response. He simply hoped that everything would turn out for the best. Then he deftly resumed his polite inquiries about my experiences in America and my plans for the future, and expressed his good wishes. His conversation ran in easy, and, so far as I could judge, well-chosen and sometimes even elegant phrase, and the timbre of his voice had something peculiarly agreeable. A few years later I heard him deliver a speech in the Senate, and again I was struck by the dignity of his bearing, the grace of his diction, and the rare charm of his voice — things which greatly distinguished him from many of his colleagues.”

In contrast to this vivid sketch of the outer man, let me give one or two incidents while Secretary of War that reveal the inner man.

One morning as he was about to sit down to breakfast, the doorbell rang and a young, careworn



mother was ushered in with a crying baby and a yelling boy, his hand clutched in hers. She was the wife of a private soldier and had come to appeal in his behalf from a court-martial sentence. Davis heard her story, had her accompany him to the breakfast room, placed a chair for her at the table and then led the boy to Mrs. Davis, saying: "My little man, here is a lady who comforts crying boys."

Breakfast over he went with the woman to the President and on her return sent a note to Mrs. Davis asking her to provide an early dinner, to give a dollar to each of the children, and the butler to take them to the train and buy them tickets home. Light must have been that poor woman's heart as she put her children in their beds that night, and so long as she lived deep and abiding, we are sure, was her gratitude.

Again, there was a professional beggar, an old, disfigured woman who daily — winter and summer — would sit knitting stockings before the door of the War Department. Every day Davis would send the office messenger with a small sum of money to the old creature, and insisted that Mrs. Davis should provide her with a cushion. And by the way, the messenger (Patrick Jordan was his name), just before he died long after the war was over, asked his wife to return a gold pencil that Davis had given him. Mrs. Davis says in her Memoirs that her husband's eyes were misty as he read

Patrick's widow's note accompanying the memento.

Here is another incident we think worth recording: Lieut. Robert Ransom, later General Ransom of the Confederate Army, came to Washington for his wedding to an intimate acquaintance of the Davises, who a few days after his arrival gave a reception. When Ransom presented himself Davis remarked: "Young gentleman, I expected to have seen you before." Ransom turned to Mrs. Davis and said: "Madam, do you think that even the Secretary of War has a right to more than one visit from a fellow on leave of absence, who is here to marry his sweetheart day after tomorrow, when she and I hope to see you and receive your congratulations?" Davis instantly replied, "Go to your sweetheart and tell her, with my love, I am her friend and shall be to her husband if he be worthy of so noble a woman."

Pierce's administration ended on the fourth of March, 1857, and at nine o'clock that day, Davis went to the White House and handed in his resignation as Secretary of War, having been reëlected Senator by his home State to the new Congress that was to meet at noon. On rising to bid farewell after a long interview, Pierce grasped his hand, saying: "I can scarcely bear the parting from you who have been strength and solace to me for four anxious years and never failed me."

## CHAPTER IX

UPON reëntrance into Congress Davis rose at once to a figure of marked national political prominence, for the Administration he had just left, and of which he was credited as the master mind, had approved the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, a bill that, by its virtual repeal of the venerable Missouri Compromise, threw the Abolition Party into a convulsive frenzy, its leaders shouting from platform, press and pulpit that it meant a wicked, premeditated extension of slavery's curse, not only over territories dedicated to freedom, but all over the wide land, and with frowning brows and savage eyes singled out Davis as the evil genius of the Satanic measure; whereas, as a matter of fact, he had had nothing whatsoever to do with its conception. It was the child of Douglas, begotten by his eager ambition for party leadership and then the presidency.

In magnitude of historic consequences that bill is without an equal in all passing Congress up to that time, or perhaps to this. Like a bombshell it startled the thousands upon thousands in the North who were reading with swimming eyes the fate of Uncle Tom in that epoch-making fiction "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and rallied every hitherto latent opponent

of slavery to the active support of the new-born Republican Party, which, under the mighty impulse of fervent recruits, marched, so to speak, with flying banners to the boundaries of the territories, south as well as north of the Missouri Compromise line, and proclaimed that slavery should not advance another step. That position it never abandoned, and the world has said it was right and wound its chaplets on the brows of its leaders.

But what did it mean to the South? This, and this only: that notwithstanding their forefathers had marched to Cambridge to save Boston after Lexington — and by the way, this book is written within a look and a throw of the Old Elm where Washington took command, — had yielded to New England desire to extend the time for stopping the slave trade when framing the Constitution; had paid their full share of the burden imposed by the operations of the tariff to protect the products of Northern factories from foreign competition; had done their full part in the War of 1812 on land and sea; indeed, had practically alone defeated the British veterans at New Orleans and borne the brunt of the Mexican War; yet, and nevertheless, not one of them all should take his property in slaves with him into an adjacent territory to establish a new home; not one be allowed to take with him the old mammy who had rocked him in the cradle, or the old “uncle” who had carried him on his shoulder in childhood,

and shown him how to make and set his traps for rabbits, partridges and wild pigeons; not one should go with him to his new home. What would domestic life be to him and his family without them?

Again, and surely, was not his property in slaves recognized in the Constitution, and on the same legal footing as the horses and oxen of the Northern man when *he* came to the territorial line to start *his* new home, unless we say that its terms had lost their force and meaning? And lo, too, the significance of this decree! Would not submission to it be equivalent to a passive acknowledgment that henceforth he was not the equal of his fellow citizen in the enjoyment of express Constitutional rights? But, and above all, how long would it be, if his claim be denied to go into the adjacent territory with his property in slaves, before his right to hold them anywhere would be denied?

Is there a Northern man of self-respect today who, had he been in the slaveholder's shoes, would not have resented, as the Southern man resented, the threatened humiliation in the eyes of the world? Would he not have said as a man of courage, such as I know my fellow Northern men to be, "If you push to extremes this crusade against slavery, bound up as it is with our domestic and economic life, we shall have to take a stand, come weal, come woe!"

Now that was Davis' position, as well as that of

thousands of Union-loving slaveholders, in reference to the aforementioned contingency. That over that contingency hung a black cloud, carrying battlefields strewn with dead bodies, some in blue and some in gray, cannot be gainsaid, for it has its living witnesses in the national cemeteries and soldiers' monuments, Union and Confederate, and its history in over fifty bulky volumes of war records bound in black.

But we are not writing history, that is a rapid, impersonal chronicle of events; we are writing, or at least trying to write, a biography which is, if well done, the complete unfolding of what is called the inner life of a man; for without a clear insight into that inner life the writer may be in a Pilate's court and pleading for the release of a Barabbas.

With this biographic aim in view then, we have touched upon one of the tributaries of the main stream of political events that had carried Davis into his position, the denial of what he and his fellow Southerners believed to be natural and in law fundamental Constitutional rights; let us go now to the source of another tributary of that main stream, the States Rights Party, with which at that time he was more or less identified.

As early as 1834 John Quincy Adams, in his diary of August 29, gives the substance of an interview in Washington which the editor of the *Charleston Courier* had sought with him. In the course of their

talk the editor alluded to the apprehension, always prevailing in the South, that the Northern people "had a perpetual propensity to promote the abolition of slavery."

"That ghost," says Adams, when with pen in hand he bent over his diary, "I believe will haunt them till they bring it up in reality. I said I had no longer the confidence in the duration of the Union that I once had, but did not say why," and with this cryptic remark closed the record of the day.

That haunting ghost was never laid; night after night thenceforth it rapped on the door till it developed a permanently morbid state of mind relative to the abolition movement against slavery. Under its influence Southern radicals, after Clay's Compromise of 1850, following the example of Northern radicals, each faction steeped with long-harbored hate and scorn for the other, revived the doctrine of States Rights which Northern radicals had made use of in the Hartford Convention of 1814 threatening withdrawal from the Union. Through the increasing ill-feeling due to the discussion of slavery and its contagious infection, the States Rights Party grew in numbers and in the end played the part in the South which the Abolitionists played in the North; both in their turn becoming the paramount force in determining the ultimate spirit of their respective sections.

At the time we are dealing with — Davis'

reëntance into Congress — the Democratic Party in the South was drifting toward the perilous beach of secession, and he with it, a believer as he was from his youth up in the sovereignty of the States and their justification, under certain conditions of humiliation breeding insurrection to reassert that sovereignty. So then, on one of those preordained tides in the life of nations, Jefferson Davis drifted with the South, just as Abraham Lincoln drifted with the North, for when he was in Congress, 1847, and sixteen or seventeen years after that reputed remark of his upon witnessing a slave auction in New Orleans, which more than one of his biographers have dwelt upon with satisfaction, "By God, boys, let's get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing (meaning slavery) I'll hit it hard," he offered a bill whose fifth section was in these words:

"That the municipal authorities of Washington and Georgetown, within their respective jurisdictional limits, are hereby empowered and required to provide active and efficient means to arrest and deliver up to their owners all fugitive slaves escaping into said district." Washington at that very time had a public slave-auction room, with its weekly heart-breaking spectacles. When Lincoln offered that bill so in contrast with the well-known work of art in which he is depicted breaking the chains of a slave, the life of the Union was threatened, he was



willing to return the fugitives to their owners for the Union's sake, to which he was tied as Davis and thousands of fellow Southerners were tied, by a reverential memory of the days when their forefathers made such a heavy sacrifice to found it; but on the current of events he drifted, drifted from that slave-capturing bill to the Emancipation Proclamation at last, and then to fame immortal. The incident only proves that he was human and not "that faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw." In the glaring light of circumstances like these, so inconsistent with subsequent events illumined for all time, whose voice shall we listen to in judging the careers of the personages of those days? To me the sweetest, and we think in the long run the wisest, is that of charity.

## CHAPTER X

SOME time in the early winter of 1858, Davis fell seriously ill with laryngitis, not only losing his speech so that he had to make known his wants in writing, but also his left eye, that had never fully recovered its strength from a previous attack, became so inflamed, swollen and at last totally blind that he could not endure any light whatsoever in the room. His affliction was long, painful and debilitating, yet not without some compensation, for as in the wake of devastating forest fires the willow-herb appears and blooms, so sympathies and delicate attentions from old friends decked the track of his sickness; and no one was more devoted and spontaneously kindly than Seward, his great political antagonist, who almost daily would go and sit by his bedside, telling him what was going on in the Senate.

On one of these Good Samaritan visits the haunting slavery question came drifting along on the current of their gossipy, informal talk. Mrs. Davis asked the visitor in view of his seeing slavery as it actually was while an instructor at an academy in Georgia, how he could make such piteous appeals for the negro and believe all he said in the debates. "I do not," he answered good-naturedly, "but these

appeals, as you call them, are potent to affect the rank and file of the North." Davis, surprised by Seward's remark, asked with gravity, "But, Mr. Seward, do you never speak from conviction alone?"

"Never!" he responded emphatically; whereupon Davis raised his blindfolded head and whispered, "As God is my judge, I never spoke from any other motive." Seward put his arm about him and gently laid him down, saying, "I know you do not. I am always sure of it."

This happening is full of light; favorable indeed for Davis, and most illuminating as to the character of Seward, whose whole subsequent career shows that he had uttered an absolute truth.

On its face, however, that was the speech of a charlatan; but he was not a charlatan, he was a gifted, long-foreseeing, practical statesman, whose life's aim was to enhance the welfare and the glory of the country he adored. For this end he was ready to make factitious appeals when dealing with the incubus of slavery, ready to use duplicity with the Commissioners of the South as to the evacuation of Fort Sumter, to bid defiance to Great Britain and France over the recognition of the Confederacy in the darkest hours, and at last, and notwithstanding his attempted assassination by a Southern sympathizer, to plead in behalf of the defeated, forlorn and helpless South against the vindictive revenge of the radicals of his own party. Truly, truly, like

a great scarred battleship that had sent her boats to a sinking enemy, he came into port grandly. Moreover there was a grain of poetry in his nature, for it was he who suggested to Lincoln that beautiful and touching paragraph, ending so well his first inaugural and gleaming its entrance into the company of great State papers.

Davis had another friend, the famous Gen. Edwin V. Sumner, who in the war commanded the Second Corps of the Army of the Potomac, and whom the fields of Virginia and Maryland remember right well, who during Davis' illness used to visit him in the darkened room and talk with him by the hour over bygone days, engagements with the Indians, frontier experiences, and all that army gossip that has wiled away so many an hour for the soldier in peace and war.

But the most interesting thing was this: Sumner had come on to Washington seeking satisfaction for a discourtesy and affront from Colonel Harney, and had sent him a challenge through his friend Colonel Hardie. When Davis heard the story he whispered to Sumner, "You do not want to fight, of course, but have the matter explained and the wrong acknowledged."

"Well, I do not know about that," responded the old warrior, "I rather think I prefer fighting," but his and Harney's seconds smoothed out the trouble and laid away the pistols. Let the war rage as it

might, defeat come with calumny and imprisonment, yet the ties that bound Davis to the old soldier who sat by his bedside and officers who fought against him never broke and were still green when death overtook him.

The last of June, when able to travel, Davis, with his family of little children, took a steamer at Baltimore, sailed down the Chesapeake and around Fort Monroe, where a few years later he languished so long, and thence out to sea for Portland, Maine, — drawn thither by the cool, refreshing breezes that come in off the sea and play among the beautiful, wooded islands of Casco Bay — and to be once more with a West Point friend who was spending the summer there, Dallas Bache, then at the head of the Coast Survey, and who had the gratitude of every ship's captain of that day for the lighthouses he had built and the harbors he had charted.

Davis met many well-bred and well-known people, and made many, many friends that summer; when it was over he started in October for home, but the day he reached Boston one of the children was stricken with membranous croup and came near dying.

Much to the comfort of Davis and his wife, Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, whose fame, like venerable lilac, still blooms in the antique garden of Boston's aristocracy, went to their hotel, (the Tremont House,

overlooking the Granary Burial Ground, the grave of Sam Adams beneath its windows), and did a nurse's part all the night long, a kindness the Davises never forgot, and a perfect example of the many charming surprises in the Puritan character.

During the child's convalescence Davis, at the request of a committee of leading Democrats headed by Caleb Cushing, his fellow member in Pierce's Cabinet, made an address in Faneuil Hall. The main body, the galleries, and the aisles of that famous hall were packed. Davis was at his best, he felt the spirit and heard the voice that abides there, and a better, a fairer, a more thoughtful or earnest speech he never made. He discussed the issues then engaging the aroused attention of the country, abandoned no ground he had ever taken as to the Constitutional rights of the South, used no epithets or disrespectful language against the Abolitionists, notwithstanding their almost personal enmity since the Pierce administration, and closed with a glowing, solemn appeal that the old ties which had bound the colonies in their days of trial be not broken. And now, as from time to time while writing this book, I pass the grave of Sam Adams and his fellow-revolutionary patriots in the Granary Burial Ground on which the windows of the Tremont House then looked down, it is never without a feeling that the memories they evoked swept as with a spectral hand the chords of his love for the Union as he spoke in Faneuil Hall.

He was the last great slaveholder that ever stood on that historic platform and talked out of his heart to the people of Boston; I am fain to believe he left on his audience an impression that was favorable; in bearing and language he had shown he was a gentleman, one, moreover, who had stood the gentleman's final test — the dangers of a battle-field; and we are inclined to think, too, that as they listened to his engaging, cultivated voice filled with strength, respect and candor, he seemed to them a worthy representative of the Southern men who had stood by their gallant forefathers — the Adamsses, Sam and John, Knox, Hancock, Greene and Lincoln.

## CHAPTER XI

THE next three years, 1858 to 1861, of Davis' life and that of his fellow-countrymen, South and North, were momentous for him and them, and we are convinced that no one can read the newspapers, the diaries, or the speeches in Congress of those years without realizing that our country was approaching the brink of a volcano. In those three years there were three events which stand out, towering above all others and throwing long, dark shadows.

The first of these was the effort on the part of some declamatory Southerners, like Spratt of South Carolina, and Yancey of Alabama, to re-open the slave trade. This wicked movement, advocated by a few and condemned by the bulk of the people in the South, not only did the South more discredit than any act in all its history, but also had most fateful results: for the Abolitionist conscience, already in a state of chronic feverishness, now became furious, and turned away from the path of sympathy to that of hate and its fellow companion, revenge.

The newspapers of those days are full of evidence that slavery as a question of morals was turning



fast into one that encouraged violence for its extermination. Here is an example, one of hundreds that might be given in proof of this raving state of mind. It is from a pamphlet circulated in Northern Ohio and New England. "Our plan is to land military forces in the Southern States, who shall raise the standard of freedom and call the slaves to it and such free persons as may be willing to join it. Our plan is to make war openly or secretly, as circumstances may dictate, upon the property of the slaveholders and their abettors, not for its destruction, if that can be easily avoided, but to convert it to the use of the slaves. If it cannot thus be converted, we advise its destruction. Teach the slaves to burn their masters' buildings, to kill the cattle and hogs, to conceal and destroy farming utensils, to abandon labor in seedtime and harvest, and let the crops perish. To make slaveholders objects of derision and contempt by flogging them whenever they shall be guilty of flogging their slaves."

Is it any wonder that, with a state of mind so seething with madness as this, John Brown should attempt what he did — the seizure of the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry — having in view to put its arms into the hands of the slaves whom he counted on joining him?

Up to that time no event since the Nat Turner Insurrection so startled the South from one end to the other. I was at West Point in those days, and

James B. Washington, whose father was a nephew of George Washington, captured by Brown, was a fellow cadet with me, and I know how the event was interpreted by every Southern man in the Corps.

It is true that the bulk of the Republican Party, with whom the original Abolitionists were mainly incorporated, disclaimed, and with deep sincerity, this act by Brown. But their disclaimers, however sincere, were impugned by the fact that on the day of his funeral streets and houses in New England were draped in mourning, dirges were sung, and bells were tolled.

Reader, put yourself in the shoes of a Southern man, with or without slaves. Would not those draped streets, dirges and tolling bells have been ominous to you? Would they not have indicated, as the rattle of a rattlesnake, that there was danger near? For could any sane man fail to conclude that manifestation, so solemn in its kind, was indicative of deep-seated passion, one that even the horrors of insurrection could not put under restraint.

Davis in an offhand speech characterized the John Brown raid as an "invasion of a state by a murderous gang of Abolitionists, one that might have had its germ in the doctrine of an irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery," and, referring to a remark by a Southerner as to the want of sympathy on the part of the North, he exclaimed: "I have not asked for any sympathy. Sympathy,

however, is the character of fraternity, sympathy is the nature of abhorrence of crime; sympathy in an odious shuddering at the spectacle of those who came to incite slaves to murder helpless women and children I might have expected in the breast of every gentleman."

This exclamation is so manifestly full of suppressed feeling it may perchance be interesting for the reader to see him as others saw him. A little while before the raid, Greely, in an editorial in the *New York Tribune* of August 8, said: "Mr. Davis is unquestionably the foremost man of the South at the present day. Every Northern Senator will admit that from the Southern side of the floor the most formidable adversary to meet in debate is the thin, pale, polished, intellectual-looking Mississippian with the unimpassioned demeanor, the habitual courtesy and the occasional unintentional arrogance which reveals his consciousness of great commanding power. It is a mistake to confound him with declaimers like Keith or with vulgar brawlers like Brown, his Senatorial colleague, or with mere scheming politicians like Greene [of Kentucky], Clingman [of North Carolina], Slidell and Benjamin [of Louisiana]. He belongs to a higher grade of public men in whom formerly the slave-holding democracy was prolific."

Greely had been in Congress with Davis, and I think his description is the most vivid and his estimate probably the truest that ever was made of him.

As a supplement to what Greely said of him we will let the following extract from a speech he made shortly after Greely's editorial speak for itself.

"And in this connection [referring to Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, with whom he had been discussing earnestly] it is but proper I should say that, if yesterday there was anything in my language or my manner which personally reflected on that Senator, it was not so designed. I am aware that I am very apt to be earnest, perhaps some would say excited, when I am speaking, and it is due to myself that I should say now, once for all, that I do not intend ever to offer discourtesy to any gentleman. By no indirection, by no equivocal expression, do I ever seek to injure the feelings of any one."

The next precursory event in his life was the split of the Democratic Party at Charleston in April, 1860, resulting in four candidates in the field for the presidency. Lincoln at the head of the Republican Party, confined almost entirely to the Northern States, Breckinridge practically to the South, Douglas to the Democratic Party of the North, and Bell to the old-line Union-loving Whigs, South and North.

Davis has much, very much of the blame to carry for this split in the party; had his opposition to Douglas not been so vehement he would have been nominated and stood a fair chance to beat Lincoln. But as we see things now in their true perspective,

the war between the sections would have been postponed for another four years only, at most. Deal with this and that political phase of those times as we may, lay blame here and blame there, on the leaders North and South, yet after all there was no escape from the bloody conflict; our country's destiny was on her appointed way to future glories, and battlefields she had to cross. The gist of the platforms was as follows:

The Republican: "Slavery can exist only by virtue of municipal law;" that there was no law for it in the Territories and no power to enact one, that Congress was "bound to prohibit it in, or exclude it from, any and every Federal Territory," and that it was the right and duty of Congress to prohibit "these twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery" in the Territories.

The Douglas Party affirmed "the right of the Territories in their territorial condition to determine their own organic institutions," denying the power or the duty of Congress to protect the persons or property of individuals or minorities in such Territories against the action of majorities; in other words, they were to allow or disallow slavery as they saw fit.

The Breckinridge Party claimed that the Territories were open for settlement to citizens of all the States without inequality or discrimination; that is, a slaveholder could take his slaves with him and

on the same footing as the citizen whose property was in horses, or oxen and household furniture; but on emerging from a Territorial government to a State, the people could then determine whether slavery should or should not exist.

The Bell Party ignored the territorial controversy altogether, making a single declaration of adherence to "the Constitution, the Union, and enforcement of the laws"; that is, the Fugitive Slave Law, which at that very time States of the North had set at defiance by imposing imprisonment and fine on any of their citizens who might try to enforce it.

During the campaign Democratic friends of Davis requested him to interview Bell, Breckinridge and Douglas, and urge them to withdraw in favor of some one on whom all could unite, for it was obvious that, with three candidates in the field, Lincoln was sure to be elected. In compliance with this request Davis went to see Bell and Breckinridge, who were ready to retire, but Douglas said it was too late, that in case he withdrew many of his supporters would go to Lincoln, and there the matter dropped.

Here let me say that Douglas has never been given the meed of praise he deserved; notwithstanding the Republicans had lit his way from Washington to Chicago by burning effigies of him, he stood by Lincoln after he was elected, thereby rallying Northern Democrats to his side by hundreds of thousands. But they rendered a great service, in a

moral sense a greater service than that, inasmuch as after the war was over they were the first to hold out their hands to the South and renew the old ties, winning thereby that victory for peace which Milton had in mind.

The voting at that election, the most historic in our annals, may be to others what it is to me — full of interest.

NUMBER OF VOTES CAST FOR CANDIDATES

	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Total</i>
Lincoln	26,430	1,840,022	1,866,452
Douglas	163,575	1,213,382	1,376,957
Bell	515,973	72,906	588,879
Breckinridge	570,951	278,830	849,701

Analysis of this tabulation shows that, exclusive of Lincoln's vote, there were 679,548 voters in the South who were not in sympathy with the Keiths, Rhett, Wigfalls, Slidells and Yanceys, contradicting so many of our historians who, through oversight, ignorance or intent, have left the impression in some of our school books of an almost universal lust for disunion and war on the part of the South. And these same historians — is it unfair to say consciously or unconsciously — harboring the spirit of vengeance, attributed to Davis the desires that animated the Rhett, Wigfalls, Slidells and Yanceys; in fact, that he was the prime mover and leader for war and disunion; a charge which I trust the narrative in its course will demonstrate was as unfounded as it was unjust.

## CHAPTER XII

MR. LINCOLN's election was celebrated with great rejoicing, but its bonfires had barely died out before a deep silence settled all over the land, such as prevails at sea before the rush of a tornado. In that silence men of character and heads of families, North and South, were thinking deeply over what had happened. The doctrine of the irrepressible conflict had been obviously approved and had carried the day. The victory had been complete, the forces that had won it had been inspired by the sins of slavery.

And now what? Would the party that had triumphed lay down its oars, so to speak, and bask in the sunlight of political power, or would the irrepressible conflict go on? On the other hand, would the South carry out its repeated threats to secede if a party were elected pledged to confine and gradually smother the life out of slavery.

These were the ghost-like questions that would not down, and drove sleep away from many a pillow. My roommate at West Point, from Georgia, night after night would lie in bed execrating Southern fire-eaters and Abolitionists. His state of mind was a fair type of thousands South and North. Sweet,



sweet was his nature! And no youth followed the Confederate flag with more manliness, higher ideals or courage than John Asbury West of Madison, Georgia. His memory is dear to me. Meanwhile, conservative leaders of the Republican Party, reflecting on the situation and appreciating their responsibility, cast about for measures that would benumb their victory and forestall peace-breaking movements, when lo, South Carolina, the infatuated mother of secession, called a convention on November 26 to take the legal steps for withdrawal from the Union.

Like a fire through their dead canebrakes, this madness of South Carolina went sweeping over the Gulf States. The Border States, however, under the lead of Old Virginia, wearing the mantle of sovereignty, stood firm, yet in painful anxiety. Through slavery they were bound to the Gulf, but the graves of Washington, Jefferson, Marshall and Madison were pleading that the ties of the Union be not broken.

It has always seemed to me that the ties which bound the South to the Union were wound a little closer around the heart than in New England. It may have been a mere matter of temperament, but an agricultural people, alone with their woods and willow-bordered streams, have far deeper and keener feelings than the huddled workers in noisy mills. You can sing following a plough, at the end of a

long furrow while the horses are resting, you can look on the floating, bulging clouds, can hear the bob-white whistle and the bluebird warble, but you cannot take your eyes off a clattering loom, lathe or boot-sewing machine; nor from the doorstep of your mill-owned tenement, when the day is done, look off over fields where the dew is gathering on blooming clover and blading corn to catch the beams of a rising moon. To the planter the country was a sentiment; to the mill-owner and pig-iron manufacturer a commercial agency.

On Monday, December 3, 1860, Congress met, and on Thursday a resolution was offered in the Senate for the appointment of a Committee of Thirteen to consider the state of the country and recommend such legislation as would secure its peace. At once bitterly acrimonious discussion over the responsibility for the crisis began and continued growing fiercer day by day. Although condensed it covers pages of the *Congressional Globe*, abounding with epithets and innuendo. It was nightly clicked off by the telegraph to every leading newspaper, North and South, to be read the next morning with eager interest and increasing anxiety.

On the twentieth a motion was made to adjourn over the holidays to January 2. Davis opposed the motion, saying: "I do not know that we shall achieve much good by meeting, but in the present perilous condition of the country I am not willing to take a

holiday. I propose that we shall continue our sessions, for good if God grants it, and for evil if we will have it so."

On the tenth he had made quite a long speech, some of which was very untimely argument, I think, but as we all know well when passion is raging, as then, that wise master counsellor, Wisdom, withdraws and keeps her silence, for she knows her voice will not be heard. In the course of it, however, he said this: "I have heard with some surprise, for it seemed to me idle, the repetition of the assertion heretofore made, that the cause of the separation was the election of Mr. Lincoln. It may be a source of gratification to some gentlemen that their candidate is elected; but no individual had the power to produce the existing state of things. It was the purpose, the end, it was the declaration by himself and friends which constitutes the necessity of providing safeguards for ourselves."

Later he said: "It may be pardoned me who in my boyhood was given to the military service, and who have followed under tropical suns and over northern snows the flag of the Union, suffering from it as it does not become me to speak of it, if I here express the deep sorrow which overwhelms me when I think of taking a last leave of that object of early affection and proud association. But God, who knows the heart of men, will judge between you and us at whose door lies the responsibility of this."

After ten days of impassioned discussion the resolution for the appointment of a committee passed, and Davis was named as a member. He at once asked to be excused, but that night at the urgency of friends he consented to withdraw his declination, and the next day said:

"Mr. President, in the very words which I addressed to the Senate yesterday I intended to express my conviction. It was not a matter of personal feeling with me. If I know myself, no public duty ever is. My opinion was that the State of Mississippi having taken the subject into her own hands, I could not expect to work advantageously on the Committee. Neither could I under the circumstances enter upon the labor as willingly as I trust I have usually done in all my service. But if in the opinion of others it be possible for me to do anything for the public good, the last moment while I stand here is at the command of the Senate. If I could see any means by which I could avert the catastrophe of a struggle between the sections of the Union, my past life, I hope, gives evidence of the readiness with which I would make the effort. If there be any sacrifice which I could offer on the altar of my country to heal all the evils, present or prospective, no man has the right to doubt my readiness to do it."

Davis took his seat on the committee and the record shows that he voted again and again for

measures aimed to avert dangers and pacify the country; but all of them failed to receive the necessary majorities, and after sitting ten days it reported to Congress that it could not agree, and on December 31 was discharged.

Meanwhile the Gulf States, including his own, had called conventions that were then in session, and looking back at them now, their members in tempestuous delirium appear like so many dead leaves in the swirl of the whirlwinds we sometimes see on a clear summer's day. On January 5 a conference of Southern Senators and Representatives was held in Washington, and at its end a letter was written to their respective Governors stating that every measure to preserve peace had failed and that in their judgment secession was the only ultimate safeguard for their interests. Davis was present and signed this report, and, whatsoever penalty may be the final verdict, he must bear it.

While this letter may have accelerated the movement, no power this side of Heaven could have stopped it. Back of the North was the aroused conscience of the civilized world in its attitude toward slavery; back of the South was the fundamental political axiom that peoples have the inalienable right to decide the form and spirit of government which they will tolerate and submit to.

Mississippi withdrew on January 9; and, in connection with this step, there was a preceding one

which throws some light on Davis. In November, after South Carolina had taken wing, the Governor of Mississippi called home its Representatives in Congress for consultation as to the course of the State relative to secession. O. R. Singleton, one of the members of the House who was present, wrote as follows concerning that conference:

"The debate lasted many hours and Mr. Davis, with perhaps one other gentleman, opposed immediate and separate State action, declaring himself opposed to secession as long as the hope of a peaceable remedy remained. He did not believe we ought to precipitate the issue, as he felt certain from his knowledge of the people North as well as South, that once there was a clash of arms, the contest would be one of the most sanguinary the world had ever witnessed.

A majority of the meeting decided that no delay be interposed for separate State action, Mr. Davis being on the other side, but after the vote was taken and the question decided, Mr. Davis declared he would stand by whatever action the Convention, representing the sovereignty of the State of Mississippi, should think proper to take. After the conference ended, several of its members were dissatisfied with the course of Mr. Davis, believing that he was entirely opposed to secession and was seeking to delay action upon the part of Mississippi with the hope that it might be entirely averted."

Clay of Alabama, who was arrested and confined in Fort Monroe with Davis, sometime before death overtook him, wrote: "Mr. Davis did not take an active part in planning or hastening secession. I think he only regretfully consented to it as a political necessity for the preservation of State Rights.

I know that some leading men and even Mississippians thought him too moderate and backward, and found fault with him for not taking a leading part in secession."

These letters from friends of Jefferson Davis were written after the war and are to be construed in the light of defense and sympathy for a lost cause. But does defeat crush the life out of all honor and truthfulness? If the Revolution had met that fate, would a letter from Hamilton, John Marshall, or John Adams be discredited as to anything they saw, heard, or did before they took their stand against Great Britain? We think not; for honor and truthfulness are deep-rooted plants in the American character. Give these letters, then, the weight which the scales of reason and knowledge of human nature may say is their worth as evidence.

The official notice from the Governor of Mississippi, that the State had withdrawn from the Union, reached Davis on the twentieth of January, 1861, and on that day he wrote to Ex-President Pierce:

"I have often and sadly turned my thoughts to you during the troublous times through which we have been passing, and now I come to the hard task of announcing to you that the hour is at hand which closes my connection with the United States for the independence and union of which my father bled and in the service of which I have sought to emulate the example he set for my guidance. . . .

May God bless you is ever the prayer of your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS."

It was known that, on the following day, Davis would take leave of the Senate, and as soon as the doors were opened the galleries, aisles, and all standing room were filled. Every Senator was in his seat, all eyes were on Davis, and awe and wonder were in every heart-beat.

The hour came, he rose — ~~care~~ had left her tracks of a sleepless night in his pale face and, as his eyes swept the men he had served with so long, streams of regret poured out of them for agreeable associations that would never be enjoyed again.

His voice at first was low — he had been unwell for several days — but as he went on restating the grounds of his political views, the sovereignty of the States and their right to exercise that sovereignty in the face of appalling dangers, his voice regained its vibrating, winsome modulation and earnestness. He closed as follows:



"In the course of my service here, associated at different times with a great variety of Senators, I see now around me some with whom I have served long; there have been points of difference, but whatever of offense there has been to me, I leave here. I carry with me no hostile remembrance. Whatever offense I have given which has not been redressed, or for which satisfaction has not been demanded I have, Senators, in the hour of our parting to offer you my apology for every pain which in the heat of discussion I have inflicted. I go hence unencumbered by the remembrance of any injury received, and having discharged the duty of making the only reparation in my power for any injury offered.

Mr. President and Senators, having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it only remains for me to bid you a final adieu."

There is a strain of knightly manliness, its tones mingled with sorrow and regret, running through the conclusion of this leave-taking; a strain that the spirit of the dead Confederacy can dwell on in her loneliness with pensive pride.

We doubt if in all his career he ever rose above the level of that occasion; nor one, it seems to me, when all the elements of his character were in fairer light or fuller play. That apology for any wrong or pain inflicted; that assurance to his associates

in the Senate of going away unencumbered by the remembrance of a single injury received from any one of them, speak for the inborn goodwill and chivalry of his nature.

( [ Persons who were present say that as he made his way out of the Senate Chamber, hushed by a portentous awe of what it all meant, he was followed by many swimming eyes.

This farewell to the Senate marked one of the crests in his life's travelled road. Behind him lay what has already been set forth, his services to his country in the field where he shed his blood in defense of her flag; his Congressional and official life where he had been steadfastly loyal to her ideals. Meanwhile not a stain had fallen on his private, nor a charge of insincerity or unscrupulous ambition on his public, character. The broad-minded Republicans in the Senate, although opposing and condemning his political views, nevertheless held him personally in highest respect, and those of both parties who knew him intimately, in warmest affection. [ As for the public at large he had never courted its esteem, yet he had never joined a group or addressed an assemblage, North or South, in Faneuil Hall or New Orleans, without securing it — a mighty proof of his intellectual power and the atmosphere of personality in which nature had clothed him. On every occasion in all the years that now lay behind him, he had stood for the

sovereignty of the States as well as the sovereignty of the Government which they had created and set over them; maintaining that there was a vein connecting the political bodies of both in which the same blood flowed with every heart-beat of the Nation.

It is true, and natural, that the inveterate haters of slavery and the South were glad to see the last of him; inasmuch as for years they had suffered, as the ambitious always suffer, in the presence of an opponent born into a class of acknowledged social prestige who meets their heated arguments, not only with cool, masterful reply, but also uniform urbanity, augmented in Davis' case with that unconscious air of austerity in which nature had wrapped him. Many had been their conflicts with him, but he had never lost his self-control; not even when defending the South from their severe denunciation and, at times, outrageous abuse; moreover, he used no opprobrious or abusive language, yet there was a tone of challenging defiance in his voice and manner that showed indignation. His departure, then, from Congress was the end of a long and galling servitude for leaders that might be mentioned; a servitude of a kind and nature that always forges while it is endured those well-known characteristic weapons — obloquy and revenge. The history of our country abundantly shows that, so long as certain leaders and their disciples lived, these

weapons were in use, let the spirit of goodwill and magnanimity which Grant showed Lee at Appomattox plead as it may with their users to lay them down.

( Mrs. Davis says in her Memoirs that that night she heard the often reiterated prayer, "May God have us all in His holy keeping, and grant that before it is too late, peaceful councils may prevail." That prayer was not alone in its heavenward flight; like prayers were going up from many a bended knee in North and South.

As soon as they could gather up their belongings, Davis, Mrs. Davis and the three children set off for home.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE States of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana having seceded, held conventions and appointed delegates to meet in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4 and there lay the foundation of a provisional government. These delegates were chosen from the political leadership class, men who had made their mark; some for native ability; some for glowing eloquence; all for well-sustained integrity and character. Among them were Toombs, Stephens, the brothers Howell and T. R. Cobb of Georgia, Judge Chilton of Alabama, Rhett, Withers and Barnwell of South Carolina. Barnwell was a very wealthy planter carrying the atmosphere of gentleness, thoughtfulness and righteousness; a fine type of man for the building of a State.

By the time they reached Montgomery, it was overflowing with rabid politicians from all over the Southern States, hankering for war and swaggering in every hotel lobby and in every garish barroom. The delegates, forty-two out of the forty-eight appointed, organized by electing Howell Cobb for chairman, a bulky man with a broad face, double chin and mild, serious eyes, who had lately left

Buchanan's disrupting Cabinet, and was an ardent Secessionist. He and his brother were men of fine, high character and their memories are cherished by their native State to this day.

The Convention proceeded at once to draft a constitution for the provisional government, taking the one their forefathers had built and making only such changes as would more explicitly embody their ideas of state sovereignty, and such notions of administration as experience under the old one had suggested.

Along toward midnight on Friday the eighth, the Constitution was agreed upon, and the Convention adjourned till noon the next day for choice of a president, a captain to sail the ship they had launched in the face of a stormy sea; the voting to be by States. As it turned out, there were three delegates who in secret cherished the hope that they would be chosen for the presidency, the chairman Cobb, Stephens and Toombs, all from Georgia.

Stephens in body was a puny man with a sad, appealing, beardless face, his eyes a rich hazel, his voice thin and high. He had vigorously opposed secession, and Lincoln had practically offered him a place in his Cabinet; the letters they exchanged on this matter are well worth reading for the light they throw on the times and the men themselves.

Toombs was in marked contrast to Stephens; he was conspicuously large, with plenteous, shiny,

black hair and glistening white teeth which flashed in his laughter, for by nature he was joyous, but when in office, however, there was an air of urgent, imperative demeanor about him, re-inforced by abilities that had no acknowledged equal among his fellows to master the intricacies of finance or problems of state administration. Beneath all these endowments was an unsubduable restlessness when under authority which impaired his usefulness, annoyed his superiors, and embittered his old age.

As soon as the Convention adjourned, T. R. Cobb, a younger brother of the chairman and who wrote to his wife almost daily, in a letter written on the eleventh says: "We had a counting by noses and found that Alabama, Mississippi and Florida were for Davis, Louisiana and Georgia for my brother Howell, South Carolina divided between Davis and Cobb with Memminger and Withers wavering. Howell immediately announced his wish that Davis should be nominated unanimously."

When the Georgia delegation met at ten o'clock, Stephens at once moved that a complimentary vote be given Toombs. Whereupon T. R. Cobb observed that it would put Toombs in an awkward position, as four of the six States were for Davis. That was a surprise to Toombs and, doubting the statement, he asked Crawford, one of its members, to go out and report the facts. On Crawford's return verifying Cobb's statement that Davis

was virtually the choice of all the other states, Toombs with spontaneous good will nominated Stephens for the vice-presidency. A dead silence ensued upon this very unexpected move; then Howell Cobb got up and went out, followed by Barton his colleague, who was killed at Bull Run. The younger Cobb wrote to his wife that it was a bitter pill to swallow — Stephens, who had opposed secession, had been rewarded with its first honors.

At noon the delegates met and elected Davis and Stephens unanimously, and appointed a special messenger to notify Davis of his election. The Convention then took up the framing of a constitution for the permanent government. T. R. Cobb, a profoundly religious man, an elder in the Presbyterian Church, offered four motions: that the newborn government should be named "the Republic of Washington"; that there should be an explicit recognition of God; that the slave trade be absolutely forbidden; and no mails be carried on Sunday. This last motion was lost by a single vote; and, fortunately for South and North, the Convention defeated his first motion, sparing the name of Washington from association with the tragedy of a sectional war. The other motions prevailed.

Before Davis reached Montgomery, Cobb wrote his wife saying: "The best friends of the Confederacy here are troubled at the continuous rumors of

X



Davis being a Reconstructionist; that is, one ready to make a settlement with the North and the States resume their places in the Union."

Do not these rumors bear some testimony, at least, that Davis had not held extreme views? We think they do.

A few days before the arrival of the special messenger bearing the tidings of his election, Davis had had a conference with the foremost among the slaves, advising them in case public affairs should call him away, to have a care for the plantation, and above all to look after the aged and helpless.

Upon asking Bob, the oldest among them and who had suffered long from rheumatism, what he would like for his comfort, he requested rocking chairs for himself and Rhinah his wife. Davis bought the chairs as well as a number of blankets for the old couple, and cochineal flannel for Bob to wrap his rheumatic limbs. Mrs. Davis says in her Memoirs that when the Union soldiers after the fall of Vicksburg sacked the plantation, they took all of Uncle Bob's blankets, declaring against his remonstrances that he had stolen them.

The special messenger found Davis in his garden assisting in rose-cutting; that night he assembled all his slaves and bade them an affectionate farewell, and the next morning started for Montgomery.

## CHAPTER XIV

DAVIS' inauguration took place in the Capitol, whither he was accompanied by Stephens the vice-president, and a Reverend Mr. Manly. Alabama had provided a handsome coach lined with saffron and white silk hangings, and drawn by six spirited iron-gray horses driven by a colored man, of course, who doubtless was the proudest of his race that day.

The marshals were decorated with white silk scarfs, every building in holiday attire, and vast, cheering crowds, white and black, thronging the streets. On arrival at the State House, Davis was conducted by Rhett of South Carolina and Chilton of Alabama to the Congress in session; Rhett saying: "Gentlemen of the Congress, allow me to present to you the Honorable Jefferson Davis, who in obedience to your choice has come to assume the important trust you have confided to his care."

Davis was then escorted to a platform erected in front of the imposing Capitol; on a table lay the Bible in the midst of a wreath of red, white and blue flowers. If that blessed, sacred book should write its memoirs, we are quite sure it will embrace that wreath of red, white and blue among the mighty incidents of its wondrous career. He took the

oath and then read his inaugural. Its close was as follows:

“Reverently let us invoke the God of our fathers to guide and protect us in our efforts to perpetuate the principle which by His blessing they were able to vindicate, establish and transmit to their posterity. With the continuance of His favor ever gratefully acknowledged, we may hopefully look forward to success and prosperity.”

His inaugural was not keyed on home, its fire-sides, its inalienable rights to be free from a perpetually menacing danger, but on bleak, cold-blooded legal rights; and thus, lacking in sentiment and appeal, falls far below, as an effective State paper, that of Lincoln delivered a few weeks later. Napoleon said, and it is true, “ ’Tis by speaking to the soul that you electrify men.” These two inaugurals make clear the difference of the mold and clay in the natures of these two historically linked-up characters.

Davis, in dwelling upon the men for his Cabinet, had decided upon Toombs for Secretary of the Treasury and Barnwell of South Carolina for Secretary of State. It so happened that he first wrote to Barnwell, who meanwhile, having joined his fellow-members of the Provisional Congress in recommending their colleague Memminger, a commercial lawyer, for Secretary of the Treasury, declined on grounds of propriety, knowing well that

public opinion would not approve of South Carolina holding two appointments in the Cabinet. Davis then offered the position to Toombs, who after some hesitation accepted.

The other positions were filled by Walker of Alabama for Secretary of War, Mallory of Florida for Secretary of the Navy, Reagan of Texas for Postmaster-General; for Attorney-General, Benjamin of Louisiana, a Hebrew born with a perpetual smile, who had married a French Roman Catholic and was by far the all-around ablest man in the Cabinet. He had served in the Senate with Davis, and on one occasion when debating an army bill, Davis, in a nervous, irascible state from illness, made remarks in replying to him that he felt were insulting. He sent Davis a challenge by the hands of Senator Bayard of Delaware. Davis on reading the challenge tore it up, saying: "I was all wrong, and will apologize to Benjamin," and the next day in open Senate made handsome amends.

Davis, in the first letter to his wife after reaching Montgomery, said: "I was inaugurated on Wednesday. Upon my weary heart were showered smiles, plaudits and flowers, but beyond them I saw troubles and thorns innumerable. We are without machinery, without means, and threatened by a powerful opposition, but I do not despond and will not shrink from the task imposed upon it."

That he thoroughly realized the South's unread-

ness for war is made clear by a resume of its unpreparedness found among the papers of Colonel Gorgas, Chief of Ordnance for the Confederacy. Gorgas was a graduate of West Point; he married a daughter of Governor Gayle of Alabama and, although a Pennsylvanian, joined the South. It was his son, a surgeon in the United States Army, who overcame yellow fever, gaining a fame that winged its way the world around. It appears from the papers of Colonel Gorgas that there were about one hundred and fifty thousand arms in the arsenals, chiefly smooth-bore muskets; no equipment for infantry, artillery or cavalry; no field artillery or cartridges [the state and volunteer militia companies, however, had a few batteries and serviceable arms]; no rifle, and only about sixty thousand pounds of old cannon powder, and two hundred and fifty thousand percussion caps; no machinery in the arsenals to speak of and not a firearm or gun carriage had been made in the South for fifty years; not a rifle powder mill, and but one cannon foundry, the Tredegar Works at Richmond, in the entire South.

For years after the War the charge was made, and it is believed to be true to this day by thousands of naturally fair-minded people born since the conflict, that the South, premeditating secession, secured the transfer from the North of vast quantities of small arms and cannon. Here are the facts as established by Congressional investigation:

*First.* The Ordnance Department in 1857 offered for sale fifty out of one hundred and ninety thousand muskets on hand. The only Southern State that made a bid was Louisiana; it bid for five thousand at the rate of \$2.50 apiece, and finally took only two thousand five hundred; the balance were left on the hands of the Department.

*Second.* On the twenty-ninth of December, 1859, eleven months before Lincoln's election, the Secretary of War ordered one-fifth of the old flint-lock and percussion muskets stored at the Springfield Armory, Springfield, Mass., to be sent to Southern arsenals to make room for guns of a better model. [It was the barrels of these guns that inspired Longfellow's poem.] One hundred and fifteen thousand were sent, and they were included in Gorgas' one hundred and fifty thousand.

*Third.* In late December, 1860, financial irregularities of a serious nature on the part of John B. Floyd of Virginia, Secretary of War, who up to that time had been a pronounced opponent of secession, were called to the attention of Buchanan, who asked for explanations. Floyd, so it was alleged, foreseeing an enforced resignation with its trailing disgrace, shifted from an opponent to an advocate of secession and, during the ten days preceding his formal resignation, ordered cannon to be sent from Pittsburgh to forts along the southern coast. But the eyes of the North, doubting his loyalty,

were on him, and his orders were countermanded; these guns thundered at last in defense of the Government that had made them. So much, then, for the proof of premeditation on the part of the South to make war on the North [as a matter of fact it had never gone a step beyond fits of bluster]; and so much, too, for the prospect that spread away from the "smiles, plaudits and flowers" of the inauguration of its first and only President.

On the twenty-seventh of February, Davis appointed three Commissioners to go to Washington for the "settlement of all questions of disagreement between the two governments upon principles of right, justice, equity and good faith."

They arrived in Washington a few days before Buchanan's fluctuating, bewildered administration ended, but to his credit, he refused them audience.

## CHAPTER XV

AND now that we may have a clear view of the actual outbreak of the war by the firing on Fort Sumter and Davis' responsibility for that prodigious tactical blunder, we must turn back from the eighteenth of February, the date of his inauguration, to December 11. On that day the War Department in Washington wrote to Major Anderson, a Kentuckian commanding a company of Regulars, the only forces in Charleston, and who was occupying Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, a weak and easily accessible fieldwork: "You are carefully to avoid every act which would needlessly tend to provoke aggression; and for that reason you are not, without evident and imminent necessity, to take up any position which could be construed into the assumption of a hostile attitude, but you are to hold possession of the forts of the harbor, and if attacked you are to defend yourself to the last extremity."

To comprehend fully the circumstance under which he exercised the powers and intent of this order, it must be borne in mind that ever since South Carolina had seceded she had indulged in an orgy of bluster and grotesque assumptions of sovereignty, which in the light of today are amusing and astounding. For example, it sent three Com-



missioners to Washington empowered to treat with the Government of the United States for the delivery of the forts, magazines and lighthouses in South Carolina; for an apportionment of the public debt; a part of the territories; and division of all other property held by the Government of the United States, which of course meant ships, gold in the treasury, etc. Indeed, from the Governor down to the whiskey and brandy decanting barkeepers in shirt sleeves of the crowded saloons, a fantastic war delirium prevailed in Charleston. All business in that rose-blooming, beautiful city was suspended, and gaily dressed militia companies, carrying the Palmetto flag and keeping step proudly to fife and drum, paraded the streets daily, manifesting an ever-increasing disrespect for Anderson and his soldiers. As early as November 29 the Governor wrote to a Mr. Prescott, Assistant Secretary of State at Washington, who was secretly informing him of all that was going on in the various departments: "I have found great difficulty in restraining the people of Charleston from seizing the forts, etc." The situation became so threatening at last that Anderson, on the night after Christmas, spiked the guns, burned their carriages, and transferred his command to Fort Sumter three miles down the harbor from the city.

This move startled South Carolina; but delighted the men of backbone in the North, who, although

not in favor of war, were resenting her bullying gasconade. This display of loyalty lifted Anderson to fame, and the chime of bells hung in his honor in the belfry of West Point's stately chapel overlooking the Hudson and Highlands does now and will through coming years proclaim his name.

South Carolina, frothing with rage, began to throw up batteries bearing on Sumter and along the channel leading out to the ocean four miles away, to prevent any ship coming in with reinforcements for Anderson; meanwhile, the Governor of the State sent one of his aides demanding "courteously but peremptorily" that he should return his command to Fort Moultrie, which Anderson, with language equally courteous and peremptory, declined to do.

The Administration, as soon as it heard from him, secretly took steps for his reinforcement and relief; on the fifth of January the *Star of the West*, a merchant vessel sailed from New York with one hundred fifty Regulars, and supplies. The ship reached the mouth of the harbor on the ninth and, as soon as she came within range on her inward trip to Sumter, batteries opened on her and she had to withdraw and return home.

It is easy now to see that, had Buchanan, as he first intended, sent the *Brooklyn* — intrepid Farragut was in command of her — instead of the *Star of the West*, the history of those days would not be what

it is and the roar of the *Brooklyn's* guns would be heard to this day in literature and poetry; but at the urgent advice of friends to avoid giving offense and provoking war, he sent a merchant, and not a war, vessel.

The Governor of South Carolina now posted her Attorney-General to Washington with some preposterous demands. Davis, who had not yet resigned his seat in the Senate, joined the Senators from Florida, Louisiana, and Texas in a letter to him saying: "We desire to see such an adjustment, and to prevent war or the shedding of blood. We must and will share your fortunes, suffering with you the evils of war if it cannot be avoided; and enjoying with you the blessings of peace, if it can be preserved. We therefore think it especially due from South Carolina — to say nothing of other slaveholding States — that she should, as far as she can consistently with her honor, avoid initiating hostilities between her and the United States, or any other power." It has been charged by several historians that this letter was a mere mask on Davis' part to give the South more time to get ready for war. On the contrary I am willing to believe he was plotting for time to give the old love of the Union time to make one more appeal, hoping thereby that adjustments might be made at last to avoid bloodshed. We leave that, however, to the final judge of us all.

Buchanan very properly refused to give an audience to the South Carolinian ambassador. The cloud that envelops Buchanan is black and deep; but, when all the facts are laid bare the conclusion is irresistible, that great injustice has been done him. Oh, the ghosts that shriek from the graveyards of history over malicious and irreparable wrongs!

Such, then, was the state of affairs at Washington and at Charleston when Davis, a few days after his inauguration, received an appeal from the Governor of South Carolina to assume control of all forces getting ready to open fire on Sumter. He at once sent Beauregard to take command in the name of the Confederacy "but not to begin the attack"; for at that very time the Peace Conference, assembled by request of Virginia to avert a conflict between the sections, was in session, and prayers were going up from South and North imploring God to bless its efforts.

Lincoln, on the eighth of March, four days after his inaugural, called the first council of his Cabinet to discuss the situation at Charleston. On the fifteenth he called them together again; it appeared that General Scott, who had privately advised Buchanan to reinforce and hold Fort Sumter, had changed his mind and now recommended that it be given up and the "wayward sisters" be allowed to go in peace. In the face of this serious turn of affairs, Lincoln put the question, "assuming it to

be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, is it well under all the circumstances to attempt it?" Chase and Blair said "yes" and the latter emphatically; Seward, Cameron, Welles, Smith and Bates said "no."

On the twentieth, Lincoln sent Lamont his long-time friend and law partner, to South Carolina to find out just how things stood. Meanwhile parleys relative to supplies, mails, etc., were going on between Anderson, officers of the War Department and the South Carolina authorities. Lamont reached Charleston on the twenty-fifth and lost no time in seeing the Governor. At the interview he told him that Lincoln had practically made up his mind to withdraw Anderson. Lamont escorted by Colonel Duryea, one of the Governor's aides, then went to see Anderson and told him the same story, which is confirmed by the following extracts from Anderson's letters in the first volume of War Records, to the Adjutant-General:

"The remarks made to me by Colonel Lamont, taken in connection with the tenor of the newspapers here, induced me, as stated in previous communications, to believe that orders would soon be issued for abandoning this work." In a letter received in Washington on the twenty-ninth: "Having been in daily expectation since the return of Colonel Lamont to Washington of receiving orders to vacate the Fort, I have kept these laborers as long as I

could" [They were clearing up the cisterns of the Fort.] "Mr. Lamon left here [Charleston] last night saying that Major Anderson and command would soon be withdrawn from Fort Sumter in a satisfactory manner," so wrote Beauregard to Davis on the twenty-sixth. On the same day Beauregard wrote Anderson:

*"My dear Major:* Having been informed that Mr. Lamon, the authorized agent of the President, advised Governor Pickens, after his interview with you at Fort Sumter that yourself and command would be transferred to another port in a few days;" and then went on to say that he would provide suitable conveyances when Anderson was ready to move.

Moreover there is unquestionable testimony that, while Lamon was South, Seward had assured the Commissioners appointed by Davis that the promises he had made them that Fort Sumter would be evacuated would be kept.

In the light of these letters and this testimony, was it not natural in Beauregard, Governor Pickens and Davis to believe that the authorities in Washington were acting in good faith, and that Anderson would be withdrawn and war, at least for the present, avoided?

Meanwhile what was actually happening in Washington? Lamon, of course, hastened on his return to see Lincoln and must have told him all

the Governor said and all Anderson had said, and what he in turn had said to them. There is no evidence that Lincoln then or ever committed himself to an absolute withdrawal of Anderson; on the other hand, there is no evidence that he ever disclaimed Lamon's representations to the Governor or to Anderson. Seward, however, in an interview with Judge Campbell immediately after Lamon's return, declared that he (Lamon) had no agency from him (Lincoln), nor title to speak.

Let all these circumstances, and a fleet with nearly one hundred guns and twenty-four hundred men gathering at the mouth of Charleston harbor, speak for themselves as to good faith.

On the twenty-ninth of March Lincoln assembled his Cabinet at noon and each member submitted written answers to a memorandum relating to reinforcing Anderson; the Cabinet was practically unanimously in favor of it. Thereupon Lincoln wrote to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy: "I desire that an expedition to move by sea be got ready to sail as early as the sixth of April." On the fourth of April Lincoln, through the Secretary of War, notified Anderson that he would be reinforced. Anderson acknowledged that letter on the eighth, saying: "I ought to have been informed that this expedition was to come; Colonel Lamon convinced me that the idea, merely hinted at by Captain Fox, would not be carried out." Fox

had been to see him before Buchanan's term ended, relative to reinforcing him by the bay.

This quick about-face of the Administration must have stunned Lamon.

On the evening of April 8, Robert S. Chew, Chief Clerk of the State Department, and in his old age, when I saw him, a venerable, admirable gentleman, delivered in person this message to Governor Pickens:

"I am directed by the President of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only, and if such attempt be not resisted no effort to throw in men, arms, or ammunition will be made without further notice or in case of an attack upon it." Pickens called in Beauregard who was in an adjoining room to hear this message.

Beauregard immediately wrote Davis: "An authorized messenger from Lincoln has just informed Governor Pickens and myself that provisions will be sent to Fort Sumter, peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must."

To this Davis replied: "If you have no doubt of the authorized character of the agent [he was evidently thinking of Lamon] who communicated to you the intentions of the Washington Government to supply Fort Sumter by force, you will at once demand its evacuation, and if this be refused, proceed in such manner as you may determine to reduce it."



Had Beauregard sent Lincoln's notice in full and not a paraphrase, we have often wondered what would have been Davis' answer? Would he have realized the significance of Lincoln's adroit threat — if that be the right name for it — and parried it by ordering Beauregard to notify Washington that he would supply Anderson with every possible need for the welfare and comfort of himself and his troops, thus escaping the responsibility of firing the first shot? I am afraid not; for Davis was not built on the line of shrewdness; but had he done so, Lincoln could not have said, as he did in his message to Congress a few months later, that he was bound to relieve a starving garrison, knowing full well the weight of that word "starving." Lincoln knew his fellow men far, far better than Davis, and he also knew far better than he how to strike the tender chords of their nature. He forced Davis to fire that first shot, the shot that struck the heart of the North, tearing away all the questions of law and expediency that were hampering its free movements.

Beauregard, who was itching to begin the attack, upon receipt of Davis' despatch, sent a letter to Anderson demanding the evacuation of the Fort. Anderson in reply said his sense of honor prevented compliance with the demand; but, when handing his letter to Beauregard's aide, he remarked that in a few days he would be starved out whether the

Confederate guns did or did not batter the Fort to pieces.

Upon hearing this statement from his aide, Beauregard sent him back to Anderson to ask when he would agree to give up the Fort. Anderson said: "At noon on the fifteenth if meanwhile I do not receive controlling instructions or supplies." Beauregard referred the matter to the Confederate Secretary of War, who, of course, carried it at once to Davis, who probably dictated the answer: "We do not desire needlessly to bombard Fort Sumter," that if Anderson would agree to evacuate he should not be fired upon, but in case he refused, Beauregard was to use his own judgment. Beauregard immediately sent word to Anderson that he would open fire at 4.30 A.M. the next day, which he did, and after a day and night's bombardment, Anderson lowered his flag. Davis in acknowledging the despatch from Beauregard announcing the surrender said: "If occasion offers, tender my friendly remembrances to Major Anderson." They had been Cadets together at West Point.

My pen has dwelt, and perhaps too long for the reader's patience, on the firing of Sumter; but, as Davis was officially responsible for the momentous deed, it has seemed to me only fair to him that all the circumstances be resurrected, and stand once more as living witnesses before the bar of public opinion. It has been claimed, and in one sense

truly, that he made a great blunder tactical and political, in giving the first blow, a blow which the manhood and honor of the North felt deeply and was bound to resent; but over and above all, incurring the moral responsibility for beginning the war, which to this day overshadows him and the South. Yet, in the inexorable march of the world's progress, it was ordained that from some one, in his or the following generation at latest, a first shot should be fired, so intense was the feeling, so inevitable was the struggle between the sections, from the day the bells tolled the funeral of John Brown.

Upon the fall of Sumter, Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand men, virtually declaring war, and we think rightly, on the Confederacy. This call included North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, and under it the overstrained ties that bound them to the Union snapped, and they rushed to the defense of their fellow Southern States. Strangely enough, but true, from that day on to the end, in every eye that fell on the banners they lifted, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, they were banners, not in defense of slavery, but in resistance of an invasion of home. While in the eyes of the North, as a whole, from the coast of Maine to the Pacific they were banners of treason locked in the embrace of slavery. Be that as it may, after three years of battle had elapsed I saw both flags, the Stars and Stripes and that of Lee's army, flying for hours within a few paces of

each other after the explosion of the crater at Petersburg; a gentle breeze would now and then waft them out from their staffs, and to my eyes they really looked friendly and gallant.

## CHAPTER XVI

IN May, 1861, the capital of the Confederacy was moved from Montgomery. Although Montgomery is beautiful, indeed charming, yet the transfer of the capital of the Confederacy to Richmond was almost imperative in view of the fact that the first and main attacks would be from the direction of Washington; the President had to be near, not only for consultation, but to settle questions which did not admit of delay.

The change was in every sense fortunate and propitious. A city with finer good manners, freer from cheap politicians, or with more stimulating and richer traditions could not have been chosen for a capital; there the heart of the Old Dominion beat, whose arms in pre-colonial times had been quartered with those of her mother, Great Britain. From the very beginning of our country, and especially throughout the South, Virginia enjoyed a position of pride and reverence in the affections of the people: her sons, with Franklin and the Adamses of Massachusetts, had been the master workmen in building the government and directing its course; at her firesides had sat Washington, Henry, Marshall, Madison, Jefferson, the Lees, Masons

and Randolphs, and in their names Richmond and Virginia welcomed the Confederacy, staking all as in Colonial days, on that immortal principle — the right of a religiously free and intelligent people to decide the kind of a government that should rule over them. And now with more than seventeen thousand soldiers dead Richmond keeps on her way with the same good manners and the same graceful, unconscious dignity, holding dear the memory of the Confederacy that made her its capital and the ashes of its President now resting on the banks of the James as it swings along by its last green islands on its way to the sea.

Before the removal from Montgomery, one army under Joseph E. Johnston had assembled in front of Harper's Ferry and one at Manassas under Beauregard. On the twenty-first of July the Battle of Bull Run was fought, and Davis, keyed with anxiety, left Richmond and arrived at Manassas Junction four or five miles from where the fighting was going on at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

The forenoon had gone badly; the station was thronged with stragglers who crowded about the train with the usual fearful stories of defeat. Davis, looking for some one who could give him reliable information, espied a man with a gray beard and a calm face, who told him that their line was broken, all was confusion, the army routed, and the battle lost.

He finally reached Beauregard's headquarters

and, while horses were being got ready, Beauregard's adjutant-general advised him of the hazard he took in going to the field, that as President he ought not to expose himself to its dangers. But the spirit that had carried him to the front at Monterey and Buena Vista had not grown timid with age, and he set out for the guns that he could faintly hear.

They soon encountered shoals of stragglers and then the limping, bleeding wounded. Davis says that among them was a mere boy badly hurt and supported on the shoulder of a man, who swung his hat with a cheer as he passed him. I hope that little gallant fellow lived through the war and enjoyed an old age blessed with friends and plenty.

After a while, Davis fell in with Johnston, whose army most opportunely had joined Beauregard, and was told that the victory had been won, though fitful firing from the breaking Union forces was still going on. By that time the sun was low.

Davis then went to the extreme left of the Confederate line and there fell in with General Early, whose forces were lying down resting waiting for orders. Early told him of near-by wounded that needed attention, especially a Colonel Gordon of the Eighth Georgia. Davis at once looked up Gordon and found him in severe pain and one of our Federal soldiers, a prisoner, ministering to his wants. He then hunted up a surgeon and, upon leaving, Gordon asked him to give protection to the prisoner who

had been so kind. Davis took the man's name and address and left orders on his return to headquarters that he should not be treated as a prisoner but be released and sent home. Some days after Davis had returned to Richmond, he received a notice from the officer in charge of prisoners that there was one who claimed that he had been promised protection by the President at Manassas. Davis sent for him and gave orders for his release and freedom to rejoin our lines at Fort Monroe. The man said he had a sister not far from Richmond whom he would like to visit before availing himself of parole. Davis readily granted the request, and the next thing heard from him was in a newspaper from the North boasting how he had escaped, and how he had availed himself of the opportunity to visit the "sister" to make sketches of the fortifications around Richmond! I hope the good angels in charge of Paradise, out of compassion, have assigned a place to this bogus Samaritan somewhere a long way off from Davis — away, away on the other side of the Delectable Mountains — for I think it would be uncomfortable for him to meet the man who had befriended him.

It was near eleven o'clock at night when Davis joined Johnston and Beauregard in an upper room of the headquarters, not one of them dreaming that at that very hour McDowell's troops were fleeing through the darkness in the wildest panic.



While Davis was at a table writing a despatch to Richmond, Beauregard's adjutant-general, Colonel Jordan, came upstairs, saying that an officer had just come who declared he had been as far as Centreville in the tracks of McDowell's forces and found the town full of artillery that they had abandoned. "As soon as I had made my report," says Colonel Jordan, "Mr. Davis, with much animation, asserted the necessity for an urgent pursuit. I took my seat at the same table and wrote the order for pursuit substantially at the dictation of Mr. Davis." This order, for one reason or another, was not carried out; the responsibility for failure of execution soon became a question attended with most serious results; some claiming after the war was over that it was the primal cause for the defeat of the Confederacy. Later, at the risk of wearying the reader, we shall have to go into this matter with detail, but for the present it must bide its time.

With the break of daylight the next morning, a steady down-pouring, all-day rain began, and by the afternoon, when Davis set out to visit the hospitals in search of a youth of his own family reported sinking slowly, every little run and creek was bank full. At last at the approach of night he found the right hospital, and here is what he says: "It was too late, the soul of the young soldier had just left his body; the corpse lay before me. Around



it were many gentle boys suffering in different degrees from the wounds they had received." One of them replied to his expressed sympathy that he was glad to die for such a cause, and Davis adds: "Many kindred spirits ascended to the Father from that field of glory."

That night he had another conference over what was next to be done, with Johnston and Beauregard who by that time had gained a true measure of the victory; but both agreed they were not strong enough nor in condition to take the offensive. That settled, Davis promoted Beauregard to the rank of General with handsome recognition of the part he had played in the battle, and in the morning returned to Richmond.

For weeks the South was literally drunk with joy and pride over the victory; bonfires were lit, bells were rung, guns fired, old grudges were forgotten and men and women embraced one another when they heard the news. But while sobering off, facts of the utter demoralization and flight of McDowell's army came filtering down through newspapers and from letters sent home by soldiers telling what they had seen and found in the track of their panic-stricken foes. Of course, from all over the South broke the usual question: "How in the world did it happen that Johnston, Beauregard and Davis, all three right on the ground, did not take advantage of such a rout to capture Washington?"

Davis wisely at first paid no attention to the malicious gossip that soon followed, and, with the limited means at hand, went on tackling the distracting difficulties of arming and equipping new forces.

At this point and now, a chapter which will be tedious for me to write, and more tedious I fear for the reader to read, must be devoted to the outcome of this malignant gossip, namely, an antagonism between Davis, Johnston and Beauregard which arrayed parties in the South with consequences fatal, it has been claimed, to the success of its cause. Moreover, it is one of the many tragic parts in the history of the Confederacy; but that phase has no immediate interest for my pen, it is the hues of Davis' personality lit up by the unquenchable fires of the controversy.

Congress, in May, passed a bill creating the regular Confederate Army [it had hitherto been a provisional one] providing for five general officers with the title of General, and conferring the power of selection on the President. A previous Act had a provision that officers resigning from the United States Army should have corresponding rank in the Confederate Army.

Davis, on August 31, appointed to rank as Generals;

1. Samuel Cooper, assigned as Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff,
2. Albert Sydney Johnston,

3. Robert E. Lee,
4. Joseph E. Johnston,
5. P. T. Beauregard,

and now trouble began. Cooper, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Lee had won no battles; and the jealous friends of Joseph E. Johnston and Beauregard were fiercely indignant. "Had not they won the greatest victory that had ever been won?" and lo! they were overslaughed by Davis' pets. "Are the leaders of the troops of the South to be chosen for merit and accomplishments, or for old-time friendships and capacity for adulation?"

Johnston, immediately on receiving the general orders promulgating these appointments, protested that a great injustice had been done him, and was obviously touched to the quick, as the following extract from his letter to Davis shows: "It reduces my rank in the grade I hold. This has never been done heretofore in the regular service but by sentences of Court Martial. It seems to tarnish my fair fame as a soldier and as a man, earned by more than thirty years of laborious and perilous service." He ended his letter: "These views and the freedom with which they are presented may be unusual; so likewise is the occasion that calls them forth." Davis allowed his temper, ever quick when the integrity of his official action was impugned, to take the reins, and he acknowledged the receipt of that letter: "Its language is as you say 'unusual,'

its arguments and statements utterly one-sided and its insinuations as unfounded as they are unbecoming."

It is conceded that Johnston had a technical legal reason for his contention under one of the Acts preliminary to the General Act of Congress, but we will leave the decision as to whether or not he was right or wrong to minds better stored with law than mine.

That Johnston was very sensitive, morbidly so it seems to me, as to rank, is illustrated by a letter written two days after the battle of Bull Run to Cooper, who had assigned, without consulting him, an officer to his staff. "I had already," says Johnston, "selected Major Rhett for the position in question, and can admit the power of no officer of the Army to annul my order on the subject, nor can I admit the claim of any officer to command of the 'Forces', being myself the ranking General of the Confederate Army." Later he wrote: "I had the honor to write you on the twenty-fourth on the subject of my rank compared with other officers of the Confederate Army. Since then I have received daily orders purporting to come from Headquarters of the Forces. Such orders I cannot regard, because they are illegal."

When Cooper sent these letters to Davis he endorsed them "Insubordinate." Lincoln once told Secretary Welles that McClellan was afflicted

with the "slows;" Davis might have said that Johnston was afflicted with the "snarls." But, seriously, of all the fungus growths that attach themselves to militarism, that of querulous fussiness about "rank" is the worst, and has impaired the usefulness and blighted the old age of many an otherwise good soldier. It was the ruin of Benedict Arnold.

Meanwhile, the resolute North, stung by the defeat at Bull Run, was rushing troops to Washington, and McClellan, who had relieved McDowell, under the charm of his matchless personality, was organizing them into a formidable army. The Navy, too was growing and, ever ready to undertake hazardous enterprises, led an expedition against Fort Hatteras which it captured on August 29, and then set sail for Port Royal, threatening Charleston and Savannah.

The Southern public, alarmed by these disasters, asked: "Why is the Army of Johnston and Beauregard lying idle?" Johnston heard the question at Fairfax Court House, and the last of September requested Davis to come up for a conference as to what he should do. On his arrival, Johnston called in Beauregard and G. W. Smith, a division commander, who, by the way, a few months later submitted to them a report which was kept secret till the war was over, of what took place at this interview. Davis did not see this report until twenty years had

elapsed and it is needless to say it rekindled for a moment the dying-down fires in his nature.

In discussing the situation as to future movements, it was proposed by Smith to cross the Potomac above Washington and force McClellan to come out of his works and fight them on an open field. Davis asked how many men they would need; Smith said fifty thousand; Johnston and Beauregard, sixty thousand seasoned troops, that is a reinforcement of about thirty thousand strong, and suggested that they be drawn from Norfolk, West Virginia, and Pensacola or wherever Davis could lay his hands on them. Davis told them it was not possible to detach from these locations, adding that the whole country was demanding protection and praying for arms and for defence, but that he would send all the reinforcements he could; and there the matter dropped.

Apropos of the plan Johnston, Beauregard and Smith suggested, had they been supplied with troops to carry it out, it is my belief, knowing as I do McClellan's Army of the Potomac, that they would have been thrown back as Lee was thrown back in 1862 and 1863; for the fates had decided, as the war as it went on showed, that no Confederate army should stay long north of the river that flows by Mount Vernon.

There are side lights in the background of this famous interview which help to illuminate it.

The highest flaming one was the fact that the victory of Bull Run, supplementing the surrender of Fort Sumter like a south wind to a plum tree, brought Beauregard into a full bloom of military glory; and as the election of a permanent President was approaching, politics had begun her usual game. Beauregard's biographer, a member of his staff, says: "Gentlemen of position and influence outside of the Army now urged him to allow his name to be presented." Jones, in his "Rebel War Clerk's Diary Notes" says: "The battle of Manassas made everybody popular and especially General Beauregard. If he were a candidate, I am pretty sure he would be elected."

Davis had asked him for his report of the battle early in August, but up to the time of the interview, he had not handed it in, although when submitted, October 18, it appeared to have been finished on August 26.

It is a shabby, a despicable thing for a biographer to ascribe malicious motives for the conduct of his hero's enemies; and, so far as I can, I wish to avoid it; but is it unreasonable to ask, in view of the persistent criticism and innuendoes of Davis by Beauregard's friends throughout the war, why did he hold back his report with its indirect, yet damaging, charges? And, may I ask, was it strange that Davis should feel hurt when he saw it? Beauregard's biographer says it was held back that he



might get the benefit of Northern accounts of the battle. But however this may be, the belated report began with a preliminary statement to the effect that before the battle of Bull Run he had sent one of his staff to Davis with a plan for the defeat of McDowell's Army and the capture of Washington, which Davis had unqualifiedly disapproved.

The charge of Davis' responsibility for the failure to capture Washington after Bull Run, that had begun as a whisper, suddenly broke aloud as a fact by a speech made to Congress by one of its members, who had been a volunteer aide on Beauregard's staff at the time of the battle. Davis could not stand this unfair, baseless charge and had to clear himself from its damaging imputation; for it was not only poisoning public opinion, but was also undermining the administration's power to carry on the war. Therefore on October 30 he wrote Beauregard: "Yesterday my attention was called to various newspaper publications purporting to have been sent from Manassas and to be a synopsis of your report, in which it is represented that you had been overruled by me in your plan for a battle with the enemy south of the Potomac for the capture of Baltimore and Washington."

A few days later he wrote Johnston: "Reports have been and are very widely circulated to the effect that I prevented General Beauregard from pursuing the enemy after the battle of Manassas,

and had subsequently restrained him from advancing upon Washington City. I call upon you as the commanding general and as a party to all the conferences on the twenty-second and twenty-third of July, to say whether or not I obstructed the pursuit of the enemy after the victory at Manassas, or have ever objected to an advance or other active operations which it was feasible to undertake."

Beauregard exonerated him from the charge of the responsibility for not pursuing McDowell, and so did Johnston but in his answer said: "After a conference at Fairfax Court House with the three senior general officers, you avowed it to be impracticable to give this Army the strength which these officers considered necessary to enable it to assume the offensive, upon which I drew back to its present position (Centreville)."

Here then at last are the leading circumstances of the break of mutual confidence between Davis, Beauregard and Johnston. Sooner or later, as the outcome of it all, every politician that had failed to get an appointment in the Army for himself or a friend, every army contractor that had been thwarted in his greed, every Senator, Congressman, or Governor that had a grievance, every editor and reporter that had been snubbed by any member of the Cabinet — all joined in the ranks behind the champions of Johnston or Beauregard as the war went on, attributing defeat to Davis, and when the

Confederacy fell, laid its death on his shoulders. A few Southern and practically all Northern historians have in a measure sustained this verdict; many of the Northern, thoroughly convinced that he was bad in every way, were only too glad to help load him down with the failure of the South.

Let me say in conclusion of this prolonged and possibly wearying account, that I think the preponderance of evidence is in favor of Davis in this controversy and that the spirit of the dead Confederacy does not hold him responsible for her failure, on the contrary, glories in his constancy and love of her.

But I do think Davis made a great mistake in going to Manassas. A battlefield is no place for a President, a Kaiser, or a King. They do not help, they only embarrass the Commander. Moreover, had he stayed in Richmond, Johnston and Beauregard would have, in all probability through their failure to pursue McDowell, gone into a perpetual eclipse, and Lee, Davis' ever loyal helper, would have come into his own that much sooner.

## CHAPTER XVII

THAT first year of the Confederacy, whose morning broke with such glowing enthusiasm and whose first summer was so brightened for Davis and the people of the South by the victory of Bull Run, had, nevertheless, before its sun set, brought to him and them a sore disappointment. He had hoped, and they were sure, that the nations of the Old World would at once reach out the hand of welcome; for was not Cotton a king that would throw the doors wide open of every country with mills filled with looms or spindles. But to his and their surprise the Confederate ambassadors who had been received with warmly gracious formalities, soon discovered an hesitation, if not a latent unwillingness, to acknowledge the independence of the South. Day after day and week after week they plead for recognition; to this end they held out tempting commercial advantages, they appealed to the Englishman's hereditary notion of the right to be free, they used every argument, but all fell on deaf ears and they soon realized, what they had not surmised, that Vice-President Stephens, in declaring that the cornerstone of the Confederacy was slavery, had dealt a blow which aroused a sentiment more powerful than King Cotton.

It is one of the curious episodes of history that that little, pale, pathetic-looking man who had opposed secession, and in his heart worshipped the old Union, raised a ghost that could not be laid and that dragged the Confederacy down to its grave.

In the autumn the seizure of the Confederate ambassadors, Slidell and Mason, from the deck of the British steamer *Trent*, by that "I'll show you," spare-faced old Commodore, Wilkes, for a moment raised the hopes of the South; but Seward with his cool adroitness released them from Fort Warren, delivered them to an English man-of-war, and thus blew out that hope like a candle. Although disappointed, the South did not despair of England coming at last to her aid, for she was bound to realize that, if victorious, the North in due time would be her inveterate rival on the seas. Cotton was still an illusion, as well as that other fatal illusion, that the North lacked courage and would not fight long. This last illusion Davis did not share with his southern countrymen; from the very first he knew the indomitable resolution of the North, and all that autumn never relaxed a moment in preparation for the coming spring's campaigns.

In September his first Secretary of War, Walker, who had had no experience that aided him in his trying difficulties and immense labors, for the sake of health of body and peace of mind, resigned his

Hell

position. He wrote Davis this letter: "In withdrawing from your Cabinet I can, I feel assured, without any impeachment of my motives, say to you in writing what I have often said of you; that you were the only man I had ever met whose greatness grew upon me the nearer I approached him, and whose rare fidelity to principle often wounded when he most preferred to oblige." Walker's friends said that he was a brave, impulsive man and this letter shows it.

Davis appointed Benjamin in Walker's place, and before the year ended he had snubbed the Senate and made a host of enemies in and out of the Army. For, born with a contempt for military self-importance, and wearing that air, which successful Jews so often wear, of marching to the music of a triumph, his face always wreathed in smiling condescension and with manners invariably formal, did not inspire or encourage intimacy. And yet he was universally credited by friend and foe with natural and developed abilities far surpassing any one in Congress or the Cabinet, and thus this marked personality, together with the fact that he was a Hebrew, made him the target of violent anti-administration newspaper attacks. But between him and Davis there never was a break of friendship or confidence.

Only those who have had experience in staff departments can know or conceive the work that

Benjamin and Davis had to do that first year of the war in organizing, providing supplies for the army they were creating, and the innumerable perplexing questions from contractors, manufacturers, and governors of States that poured in by every mail and by telegraph almost every hour. To plan and to answer those questions they had to work all day and long into the late hours of every night, but the next morning Benjamin greeted the public with the same alert smile and lofty manner, and Davis with the same dignified courtesy and air of unconquerable will.

Toombs, restless in his position of Secretary of State and longing for the field of action as soon as the guns opened at Bull Run, resigned and Davis appointed Hunter of Virginia in his place. Nature had built Toombs on a large scale mentally and physically. He was over six feet in height, had depth and force of character. His eyes were large, black and flashing, he dressed well and kept his small, delicate hands with the care of a woman. He loved stimulating, joyous, good-hearted company, as well as that, from time to time, unfortunately, of the cup. His temper was quick but his judgment, when evoked by serious questions, calm and sure. Before the year ended he had joined Wise, Floyd, Clingman, Cobb, and other civilians craving for military glory in dislike of Davis who had appointed West Point men over and ahead of

them. At one of the early steps we took in this biography, we referred to this very attendant disadvantage of a West Point education.

Poor Clingman! One of the most disappointed, one of Davis' earliest, most persistent and virulent critics, I never think of without pity. While in the Senate he had had his portrait painted as addressing that body, and Corcoran, the Washington banker and famous art critic, had hung it in his gallery among presidents, senators, judges and generals. After the war was long over, Clingman in old age and utter poverty, his coat shiny and threadbare, his hair white, long was in the habit of going to the gallery and gazing on his portrait. One day, to his surprise, the portrait had been moved and he asked a stranger. "Why do you suppose they placed it here in this dark room?" "Oh, it is probably just a temporary change." "I do hope it is," he murmured, his lips trembling and the tears springing out of his eyes. Oh, that look back upon other days!

It will be remembered that Davis had assigned his boyhood and West Point friend, Albert Sydney Johnston, to the command of the Department of the West. Its frontier extended from the Allegheny Mountains to the western boundary of Arkansas. It was a long line pierced by the Mississippi, the Cumberland and the Tennessee, each offering the aid of iron-clad gunboats to forces making an attack. In front of Johnston was his old West Point



roommate Anderson of Sumter, Grant, Thomas and Sherman with stronger forces than he had and much better armed — indeed many of his soldiers had only converted rifles and shotguns. Conscious of this inferiority and realizing its dangers he had repeatedly called for better arms and equipment. The War Department had told him the truth — that none were to be had. This he could not make public and had to lie idle, knowing full well that an idle army, not only breeds contagious diseases, unnerves morale, and weakens confidence in its commander, but it breeds distrust in that mighty shape called public opinion. He was troubled and worried day and night, but he found no fault with Davis, for he was sure his boyhood friend thought of him and would do all he could to enable him to take the offensive.

Meanwhile, although McClellan's immense army lay idle, yet such was the charm of his personality together with his well staged, frequent reviews, it neither suffered from disease nor distrust, its rank and file waiting in perfect confidence that he would in his own good time lead them to victory.

But the cool-headed North had no illusions as to him nor to chance; all day and all night its looms, its foundries, its ammunition- and gun-making establishments and its powder mills were busy. And so were its numerous shipyards. Through the dead hours of the night they clanged with the

riveting of boilers for men-of-war, forging plates for iron-clad gunboats and for the turret of the little *Monitor* dreaming with a smile of its coming battle with the huge *Merrimac*. Moreover an expedition of land and sea forces had sailed to attack Roanoke Island; another under Farragut was about to sail for the capture of New Orleans, and Grant was waiting for Halleck's authority to fall on Johnston's line.

Such then was the situation and the prospect that lay before Davis at the end of the first year. There can be no doubt that he was conscious he had made enemies, of the loss and weakness that came to him through the abandonment of his Cabinet by one of the most powerful leaders of the South, of the mighty dangers that hung over its armies. Yet, and notwithstanding, his courage faltered not. The spirit of the youthful-browed and aspiring Confederacy, that spirit that inspired poetry, built monuments, brought tears of affection, was at his side, for she knew right well that within his breast were a will and devotion that would never quail, and that would carry her banner on many a victorious field and would never forsake her.

## CHAPTER XVIII

DAVIS' second year had barely begun when a storm of defeat set in that swept the entire northern frontier of the South. On January 19 that loyal Virginian, Thomas, who looked like, and by nature was more like, Washington than any other man of his day, broke Albert Sydney Johnston's line at Mill Springs, Eastern Kentucky. Grant, on February 6, broke it at Fort Henry on the Tennessee, and ten days after, at Fort Donelson on the Cumberland, capturing both garrisons, many guns and prisoners; Curtis broke it on March 5 at Elkhorn, amid the wild turkey-roamed and white oak-covered hills of Southwestern Missouri. Meanwhile Burnside had captured Roanoke Island just below the Virginia line on the coast of North Carolina. Some years after the war Benjamin in a letter to Colonel Charles Marshall, Lee's confidential aide, said in reference to the fall of Roanoke Island and the loss of Fort Donelson, for which the Confederate Congress by the report of a Committee found him responsible: "I consulted the President [Davis] whether or not it was best for the country that I should reveal to a Congressional Committee our poverty and my utter inability to supply the requisi-

tions of Wise [in command of Roanoke Island] and thus run the risk that the fact should become known to some of the spies of the enemy, of whose activities we were well assured. It was thought best for the public interest that I should submit to censure."

The weakness and final rupture of Johnston's lines were in a great measure due to the lack of arms and ammunition — a fact that neither he nor Davis could let the world know.

These were all bad blows and the effect on the public mind was staggering. But the one that struck nearest the heart was the fall of Donelson on the sixteenth of February. The news of this supreme disaster reached Richmond while the workmen were engaged in building a platform in front of Clark's celebrated equestrian statue of Washington, for the inauguration of Davis on the twenty-second as permanent President of the Confederacy. To add to the gloom of the forenoon of the twenty-second, a day that had been looked forward to as a day of sunlight, pomp and pride and for which great preparations had been made, the clouds that had gathered in the night and been hanging gray and lowering began to rain. Davis read his inaugural to an uncomfortable, cast-down audience under dripping umbrellas. In the course of his address he said: "At the darkest hour of your struggle the provisional gives place to the permanent

government. After a series of successes and victories which covered our arms with glory we have recently met with serious disasters. But in the heart of a people resolved to be free, these disasters tend but to stimulate to increased resistance." With uplifted hands and face, he closed as follows: "My hope is reverently fixed on Him whose favor is ever vouchsafed to the cause which is just. With humble gratitude and adoration, acknowledging the Providence which has so visibly protected the Confederacy during its brief but eventful career, to Thee, O God, I trustingly commit myself, and prayerfully invoke Thy blessing on my country and its cause." I have never stood where he stood that rain-pouring day and looked up without a strange feeling coming over me; for Washington's drawn sword is pointed directly toward Appomattox and his horse, with nervous pointed ears and staring eyes, is looking full in the same direction as if filled with prophetic terror.

Donelson having fallen opening the way to Nashville and Northern Alabama, Johnston had to draw back his lines, abandon Kentucky and give up Nashville itself, where stores had been gathered and industries for the manufacture of supplies gotten under way. This turn of affairs was so sudden, unexpected, and mortifying that all of Middle and Western Tennessee and the people of Kentucky, who had thrown their future with the

South, broke into fury; their Senators and Congressmen marched in a body to see Davis and poured out their boiling indignation over Johnston's management, demanding that he give them a General.

Davis listened to them with a pained heart; he could not tell them why Johnston had not had men enough to hold his line, or why Wise had not been able to hold Roanoke Island, but said that if Johnston was not a General he did not know where to find one. This was little comfort in the interview with Davis for the Congressional delegation; and we have no doubt that that night he and his Administration were criticised most severely in Richmond's taverns, lobbies of hotels, clubs, and newspaper offices.

Davis wrote Johnston a long letter: "*My dear General:* We have suffered great anxiety because of recent events in Kentucky and Tennessee, and I have been not a little disturbed by the repetition of reflections on yourself. In the meantime I have made you such defense as friendship prompted and many years of acquaintance justified." It then went on to say that he was in need of facts to rebut the wholesale condemnation not only of Johnston but also of the administration itself, and that the adverse comment meanwhile was undermining public reliance.

"I respect the generosity which has kept you

silent, but would impress upon you that the question is not personal but public in its nature, that you and I might be content to suffer, but neither of us can willingly permit detriment to the country.

With the confidence and regard of many years, I am truly your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS"

To this Johnston replied: "I anticipated all that you have told me as to the censure that the fall of Donelson drew upon me and the attacks to which you might be subjected;" and then goes on to give the facts before and after its fall, ending feelingly his long letter thus: "The test of merit in my profession, with the people, is success. It is a hard rule, but I think it is right. Your friend,

A. S. JOHNSTON."

Davis wrote back: "*My dear General:* Yours of the sixteenth is just received. I have read it with much satisfaction. So far as the past is concerned, it but confirms the conclusions at which I had already arrived. My confidence in you has never wavered. I hope the public will soon give me credit for my judgment [he had approved plans by Johnston for attack on Grant] rather than to arraign me for obstinacy. May God bless you is the sincere prayer of your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS."

Johnston's plans were the assembling of an army at Corinth and falling on Grant before Buell could join him. The battle of Shiloh took place on Sunday, April 6, and just as Johnston had broken the center arch of Grant's line and victory was in his grasp, a chance musket ball cut his femoral artery and with the loss of blood he was lifted from his horse and had hardly touched the ground when he drew his last breath.

Beauregard succeeded Johnston, and the weight of the testimony seems to be that he threw away the victory. "One more lunge and Grant was gone. One more hour for Johnston in the saddle," said a Confederate General, "and the Confederate States would, in all probability, have taken their place at the Council Board of the Nations of the Earth."

Davis in a message to Congress two days after Johnston's death said: "Without doing injustice to the living it may be safely asserted that our loss is irreparable; and among the shining hosts of the great and good who now cluster around the banner of our country, there waits no purer spirit, no more heroic soul than that of the illustrious man whose death I join you in lamenting. He rode on to the accomplishment of his object forgetful of self, while his very life blood was fast ebbing away. His last breath cheered his comrades to victory. The last sound he heard was their shout of triumph. His last thought was his country's, and long and



deeply will his country mourn his loss." Oh, the friendships of boyhood! And one of the charms in Davis for me is that they stayed green until he died.

Johnston's body was taken to New Orleans and had barely reached there when the city fell under the indomitable Southern-born Farragut, closing the door of recognition of the Confederacy by that most brilliant and most incomprehensible of all nations — France.

Meanwhile McClellan, under the pressure of public opinion which Grant's exploits in the West had stirred up demanding movement on his part, in March transferred his Army from in front of Washington to in front of Yorktown; Joseph E. Johnston, his very like opponent in some ways, was holding him there, the peach trees in bloom and the red-winged blackbirds warbling along their fortifying lines.

In the midst of all this disappointment, anxiety, and labor, Davis received a confidential letter from a friend, Honorable W. M. Brooks of Macon, Alabama, telling him of the adverse criticism going on as to himself and his administration. Davis in reply said: "I acknowledge the error of my attempt to defend all of the frontier, sea-coast and inland, but will say in justification that if we had received the arms and munitions which we had good reason to expect, the attempt would have been successful and the battlefields would have been

on the enemy's soil. Without military stores, without workshops to create them, without the power to import them, necessity, not choice, has compelled us to occupy strong positions. The country has supposed our armies more numerous than they are and our munitions more extensive than they have been. I have borne reproach in silence because to reply by an exact statement of facts would have exposed our weakness. Your estimate of me I hope assured you that I would not, as stated, treat the Secretary of War 'as a mere clerk,' and if you knew Mr. Benjamin you would realize the impossibility of his submitting to degradation at the hands of any one . . . Against the unfounded story that I keep the Generals in leading strings may be set the frequent complaints that I do not arraign them for what is regarded as their failures or misdeeds, and do not respond to the popular clamor by displacing Commanders upon irresponsible statements. You cite the cases of Johnston and Beauregard, but you have the story *nomine mutata*, and though Johnston was offended because of his relative rank, he certainly never thought of resigning, and General Beauregard in a portion of his report, which I understand the Congress refused to publish, made a statement for which I asked his authority, but it is surely a slander on him to say that he ever considered himself insulted by me.

If, as you inform me, it is credibly said that I have scarcely a friend and not a defender in Congress or the Army, yet for the sake of the country and its cause, I must hope it is falsely said." As to appointments in the Army, he closed this long and what must have been to him a painful letter: "I have endeavored to avoid bad selections by relying on military rather than on political recommendations."

Mr. Lincoln did not follow this course; in appointing Generals he was much wiser. What if they should lose a few battles? Was it not better to have them fighting the "rebels" than fighting his Administration? And were they not much less harmful strutting around with feathers in their hats and big spurs on their heels than haranguing conventions and inflaming the press against him? Davis never knew how to play the political game; Nature had not built him that way. From his youth up and on to the end he faced his fellow-men with the same look of dignified respect and sincerity without a suggestion of premeditated caution.

At last McClellan got his Army within hearing of the church bells of Richmond, and Davis, realizing that a crisis was at hand, recalled Lee from Charleston, and when Johnston was wounded at Seven Pines, put him in supreme command.

Then, as with a magic hand, the clouds that hung over Davis and over Richmond, were swept away. McClellan's star, that had blazed, entered

and Lee's star emerged, from a mist. Those seven days' battles, beginning among the timbered swamps of the Chickahominy and ending on Malvern Hill overlooking the James, were hard-fought and the losses were great. Davis could not keep away from them and Lee had to caution him not to expose himself.

Here let me pay a tribute to the steadfast, heroic old Army of the Potomac with whose colors I served. Never did an army show more courage than she in defending the lines of Gaines' Mill or the fields of Glendale and Malvern Hill on retreat! My heart beats with pride as I recall the conduct of my instructor Alexander S. Webb and my fellow cadet friends at West Point, Randol, Kirby, Cushing, "Nick" Bowen, Custer, and many others. Sweet, sweet are your memories, oh gallant friends of my youth.

My sense of the path a biography should follow warns me not to yield to the witcheries of battle-fields; but there is one event connected with Stonewall Jackson that I heard from the lips of my friend E. Porter Alexander, which can be found in his most interesting book, "The Memories of a Confederate Staff Officer," and one about Lincoln which can be found in McDowell's report of his countermanded movement from Fredericksburg to join McClellan just before Lee's attack, that I cannot resist:

McClellan's right having been smashed in, he first withdrew across the Chickahominy and then White Oak Swamp and there stood at bay while his vast trains made their way to the James. Lee set out in pursuit, but when Jackson reached White Oak Swamp, he sat down; it was Sunday and he made little or no attempt to cross. Hampton, after making an examination of the swamp and finding an easy and feasible way to cross it and attack, sought Jackson and found him sitting alone on a fallen pine tree and told him what he had discovered, but Jackson, probably praying, only pulled his cap lower over his closed eyes and said nothing. Alexander attributed his idleness to his desire to keep holy the Sabbath day. Owing to his after brilliant exploits, Lee nor Davis ever found fault with him, although it is generally conceded that had he shown the vigor which had characterized his movements in the Valley, McClellan's Army could not have escaped destruction. That Davis and Lee were both disappointed in Jackson and had exchanged frank views of his failure, is indicated by the following extract from a letter Lee wrote to Davis October 2, after Antietam: "My opinion of the merits of Jackson has been greatly enhanced during this expedition. He is true, honest, and brave, and has a single eye to the good of the service and spares no exertion to accomplish his object."

The other incident is this: McDowell's order to

move from Fredericksburg with some twenty-five thousand men and join McClellan, reached him on a Sunday morning. Now it so happened that Lincoln was on a visit to him and thought he had better not set out, as God would probably be on the side of him who kept the day holy.

Here are the two characters, Lincoln and Stonewall Jackson, very, very unlike, as unlike as the violet evoking south wind of an April morning is to the shivering cold blast of a winter day — both under the swaying awe of the same mystery! Surely there are depths in human nature where traits linger that we little dream of, yet when revealed how potent, how intrinsically interesting, and how they live on, at least with me, let immortal deeds and sayings overshadow them as they may.

One or two more things before we leave the battlefields around Richmond. Mrs. Davis had gone to Raleigh, North Carolina, with the children, and here are a few extracts from letters Davis wrote her:

“You will have seen a notice of the destruction of our home. If our cause succeeds, we shall not mourn over our personal deprivations; if it should not, why ‘the deluge’. I hope we shall be able to provide for the comfort of the old negroes.”

“I packed some valuable books, and the sword I wore for many years together with the pistols used at Monterey and Buena Vista. These articles will have

a value to the boys in after time, and to you now."

When he heard that the youngest child was at the point of death he wrote: "My heart sank within me at the news of the suffering of my angel baby. Your telegram gives assurance of the subsidence of the disease. But the look of pain and exhaustion, the gentle complaint 'I am tired' which has for so many years oppressed me seems to have been revived, and unless God spares me another such trial, what is to become of me, I don't know."

One thing more: Of course McClellan had to abandon thousands of his sick and wounded, and a surgeon who had remained in charge of them wrote to Lee telling him of their wants and sufferings. Lee at once wrote as follows: "I regret to hear of the extreme suffering of the sick and wounded Federal prisoners who have fallen into our hands. I will do all that lies in my power to alleviate their sufferings. I will have steps taken to give you every facility in transporting them to Savage Station. I am willing to release the sick and wounded on parole, not to bear arms until regularly exchanged."

That letter was written on the fourth of July, a worthy celebration of the day, and it is a deed like that which accounts for the Nation's pride in Lee. And now, in contrast to that despatch, Beauregard in that same year sent to his friend Miles in the Confederate Congress: "Has bill for execution of abolition prisoners after January 1

been passed? Do it and England will be stirred into action. It is high time to proclaim the black flag for that period. Let the execution be with the garrote.

P. T. BEAUREGARD."

What a dispatch! When this life is over it may be that we pass through a blessed stream which washes away all desire for cruelty and vengeance, at least I hope so

Lee next attacked Pope, who was marching an army southward through Culpeper. Pope was a handsome man and at heart kindly, but after an interview with Stanton, who despised McClellan and was most bitter toward the South, he issued manifestoes provoking the Army under McClellan and authorizing severe treatment of non-combatants of the territory he was operating in. Complaints of atrocities poured in to Davis, and he wrote to Lee that he was issuing an order denying the customary treatment of exchange of prisoners of war to Pope and his officers, saying: "For the present we renounce our right of retaliation on the innocent and shall continue to treat the private enlisted soldiers of General Pope's army as prisoners of war," and that if any hostages in the hands of Pope should be executed, a like number drawn from commissioned officers would meet the same fate. "While these facts," he concluded, "would justify our refusal



to execute the generous cartel by which we have consented to liberate an excess of thousands of prisoners held by us beyond the number held by the enemy, a sacred regard for plighted faith shrinks from the mere semblance of breaking a promise and prevents any resort to this extremity. Nor do we desire to extend to any other forces of the enemy the punishment merited alone by General Pope and such commissioned officers as chose to participate in the execution of his infamous orders."

If we bear in mind the natural and inevitable feeling of hate that was bound to follow in the territory invaded, and the heartless destruction of property and the outrageous crimes committed by stragglers, it is easy to see how Davis was driven by public opinion to promulgate the orders he did. Nevertheless, they accomplished little or no good; in fact, they only gave the North an excuse for not carrying out the cartel, thereby prolonging the duration of imprisonment with its increasing low spirits and accompanying fatal diseases. The saddest part of it all was that the truly brave had to suffer for the conduct of the cowardly stragglers.

About this time, too, a Federal officer in Missouri, where a most savage state of partisan murder reigned, took nine Confederate prisoners and shot them, so it was charged, in violation of the laws of war. Newspapers called for revenge, and it was proposed in Davis' Cabinet that a like number

should be drawn from Libby Prison in Richmond and executed. Davis said: "No, I have not the heart to take innocent soldiers, taken in honorable war, and hang them like convicted criminals." This, and like repeated examples of Davis' freedom from vindictiveness, the hardest-faced of all human frailties, will appeal, I know, to the reader's brave heart.

It will be remembered that Pope met with a most disastrous, overwhelming defeat; that Lee invaded Maryland and that Lincoln begged McClellan to resume command of his old Army of the Potomac, and that at Antietam he fought a desperate battle with Lee, forcing him to withdraw into Virginia. That most sanguinary of battles, on the rolling fields that cradle the winding Antietam Creek, in one way has been made more famous than any other field of the war; in this, that Lincoln, in the silence of meditation, had promised himself that if victory should come after all of Pope's disheartening defeats, he would issue an Emancipation Proclamation. The same spirit of religious awe that was with him at Fredericksburg, when he suggested to McDowell that the holy day be kept, was with him still; indeed, from his youth up he passed, as the world well knows, many an hour on that border land where melancholy and mystery make their home. He doubted the constitutionality of the act; he was not sure that as a war measure it would prove

effective; he was ready, as his letter to Greely shows, to continue slavery if that would save the Union, but with the guns of Antietam, he was on that borderland of mystery and heard the voices of the ages.

On Davis, and the South generally, the Emancipation Proclamation had no effect; with him and with the Army it only welded them into closer union and substituted the defense of home and the right to be free for mere political doctrine and vainglory. Moreover, whatsoever its increase of menace to the domestic life of the South and moral advantage to the cause of the North, all was more than counterbalanced by the almost simultaneous speech of Gladstone at Newcastle, in which he said: "We know quite well that the people of the Northern States have not yet drunk of the cup — they are still trying to hold it far from their lips — which all the rest of the world see they, nevertheless, must drink of. We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis, and other leaders of the South, have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either — they have made a nation."

We all know how that great man repented of this speech, but little can we fully realize what joy it was to the South: they saw England reaching out

her hand and peace blessing their land and homes. To add to the fervor of their hopes, in December, Burnside who had supplanted that disappointing child of fortune, McClellan, attacked Lee at Fredericksburg, met with a most bloody repulse and was saved from destruction by a kindly fog, underneath whose gray folds the poor old bleeding Army of the Potomac regained the hills of Stafford on the north side of the Rappahannock.

Davis at the time, anxious about affairs in the Southwest, had gone thither to get information at first hand from the officers commanding the Armies and from the people at home, and above all, to show them that their interests and welfare were in his mind as well as that of Virginia and the East.

While on this trip he addressed the Legislature of Mississippi, in the course of which he said relative to provisions for the support of families in poor circumstances: "Let the provisions be made for the objects of his affection and his solicitude, and the soldier engaged in fighting the battles of his country will no longer be disturbed in his slumbers by dreams of an unprotected and neglected family at home. Let him know that Mississippi has spread her protecting mantle over those he loves and he will be ready to fight your battles, to protect your honor, and in your cause to die."

The battle of Fredericksburg was fought on the fifteenth of December and gave Davis a happy

Christmas, but it was the last happy one in the life of the Confederacy and I think for him, too; for on New Year's day, General Bragg was defeated at Stone River, Tennessee, by the valiant troops whose fathers were the pioneers of the West and who had all the courage and intrepid initiative of the South.

In connection with this battle there is a circumstance that may be worth mentioning, showing, as it does, the sudden turn of the wheel of fortune for Davis and the South. When the first day was over there came a despatch from Bragg to him claiming a great victory, and two days after came another — a story of defeat. The same thing happened at Shiloh, at Chickamauga, and at Gettysburg. These abrupt changes of the tide must have been trying, but Davis, as a boy, had read "Pilgrim's Progress," and as these victories turned to defeat, we have little doubt that like Great Heart he bore on toward, what to him, was, the House Beautiful and the bells that were ringing in the Celestial City to welcome the Pilgrim at last — the independence of the Confederacy.

## CHAPTER XIX

It is with some feeling that we enter upon the events in Davis' life that marked the third year of his administration; for that year we met the Army of Northern Virginia at Chancellorsville and at Gettysburg — I can hear the guns to this day — and many warm friends of my cadet days, some in blue and some in gray, were killed in these battles; and it is with tenderness, too, I recall the dead bodies of the gallant Confederates that strewed the field of Gettysburg.

It was in early May. The azaleas, the violets and the dogwood were in bloom, when we fought the battle of Chancellorsville. Never was that old Army of the Potomac worse led or worse handled; and never, too, did Lee show more audacity or brilliant generalship. The world, however, has forgotten Hooker's failures and Lee's successes, and only remembers Chancellorsville as the last battlefield of Stonewall Jackson. Twilight had just given way to darkness; a full moon was just clearing the tree-tops when he fell from the fire of his own men. He lived for a few days — till the eleventh — and then, as Death laid his cold hand on him, he murmured,

"Let us pass over the river and rest in the shade of the trees."

Our old Army retreated back to the hills of Stafford. On the day of Stonewall's funeral the Confederate bands played a dirge at retreat; our bands heard them and played a responsive dirge. I never think of that chivalrous rejoinder without a flush of soldier pride.

On the death of Stonewall, Davis wrote Lee:

"A great calamity has befallen us, and I sympathize with the sorrow you feel and the embarrassment you must experience. The announcement of the death of General Jackson followed frequent assurances that he was doing well. And though the loss was one which would be deeply felt under any circumstances, the shock was increased by its suddenness.

There is sincere mourning here and it will extend throughout the land as the intelligence is received.

Your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS."

Lee wrote to Jeb Stuart the day after Jackson's death: "I regret to inform you that the great and good Jackson is no more. He died yesterday, May 10, at 3.15 p.m., of pneumonia — calm, serene and happy. May his spirit pervade our whole army. Our country will then be secure." No, no, General

Lee; Jackson could not have saved your Confederacy. He would have won you new victories, doubtless, but the North with its vast resources was sure to win the final battlefield.

Meanwhile, on the seventh, Lee wrote to Davis: "There are many things about which I would like to consult your Excellency, [Lee never broke through formality with Davis or any other living being.] and I should be delighted, if your health and convenience suited, if you could visit the army. [Davis was far from well all that summer.] "I learn today that the remaining eye of the President is failing . . . is in a very feeble and nervous condition, and he is really threatened with the loss of sight altogether." — *Rebel War Clerk Jones, in his Diary.*]

General Lee went on to say: "I could get you a comfortable room in the vicinity of my headquarters, and I know you would be content with our camp fare. Hoping that your health is entirely restored, and that you will be attended with every success and happiness."

On the twentieth Lee wrote to Davis: "I cannot express the concern I feel at leaving you in such feeble health, [He had just been to Jackson's funeral.] with so many anxious thoughts for the welfare of the whole Confederacy weighing upon your mind. I pray that a kind Providence will give you strength to bear the weight of care."

The anxious thought that was weighing on Davis'



mind was the fate of Vicksburg; at that very hour Grant was crossing the Big Black, driving Pemberton into and encircling his works. Meanwhile Joseph E. Johnston, who had been sent to relieve Pemberton and extract him, if possible, from ruin, was sending vague and discouraging messages to Davis.

Johnston may have been—what many of his friends estimated him to be—a great soldier; acquaintances of mine, who knew him intimately, were fond of him; but if there be in all his military correspondence a line or a word breathing confidence and hope I have failed to see it. Perhaps Davis did not have patience enough with him, but Lincoln had to relieve McClellan at last; and for the same reasons that Davis had to relieve Johnston—the failure to accomplish results.

On the thirty-first of May, 1863, Davis, in a long letter to Lee about troubles in Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee, and threatening movements on Richmond from the line of the York and the James, said: "General Johnston did not, as you thought advisable, attack Grant promptly, [He was then investing Vicksburg.] and I fear the result is that which you anticipated, if time be given. . . . It is useless to look back, and it would be unkind to annoy you, in the midst of your many cares, with the reflections which I have not been able to avoid." Here we have a trait in Davis; he never throughout his life burdened his friends with his trials; no one

had keener feelings, no one appreciated sympathy more, but complaint or indirect plea for sympathy never passed his lips; he shouldered his troubles and bore on in brave silence. That he was now encompassed day and night with care, a survey of the situation most clearly discloses. Pemberton, besieged by Grant; Banks moving with a heavy force to lay a like siege around Port Hudson, thereby cutting the Confederacy in two; Bragg confronted by an army which, if successful, meant leaving all of Tennessee, Northern Alabama, and about all of Mississippi open to subjugation; and the people of those States, realizing the danger, imploring help by telegraph and every mail.

He laid the matter before Lee; could he hold Hooker with a part, and go with the rest of his army, assume command, defeat Rosecrans and thus compel Grant to give up his hold on Vicksburg? Lee with superb loyalty left that to Davis to decide; he would go, but did not hesitate to say that he feared that lack of whole-hearted support, that lack of fellow-enthusiasm which common experiences alone give and which weld the different corps of an army together. On the other hand, if he should seriously threaten Washington, would he not as effectively relieve the situation in the West, and in case he should gain another victory over the Army of the Potomac, as at Chancellorsville, would not England and France recognize the Confederacy?

That Lee's heart was set on this move, there can be little or no doubt.

Davis called his Cabinet together and told them Lee's proposed campaign across the Potomac. Reagan, the Postmaster-General, whose home was in Texas and who fully realized the dangers of the Southwest, opposed it, urging that he should go with a part of his army to the help of Bragg. All the rest of the Cabinet was against him. More letters and despatches pouring in begging Davis to send reinforcements to Pemberton, he called his Cabinet together again. "It was Saturday," says Reagan in his "Memoirs." "We went early and remained in session until after dark in the evening." It was decided that Lee should cross the Potomac. Reagan went home cast down and records: "I could get no relief by talking to my wife; remained restless till probably midnight before going to bed and did not go to sleep that night. I got up before daylight and wrote a note to the President, telling him, in substance that I felt so strongly that we had made a great mistake, and asking him to again convene the Cabinet and reconsider the question." Davis granted his request, but the decision was not reversed, and Lee set off for Gettysburg. The world knows what happened. He was not only defeated but, while his army was withdrawing on the fourth of July from what was in one sense the field of their glory, Pemberton was surrendering Vicksburg to

Grant, and Bragg was melting away before Rosecrans. And fate set her loom in motion to weave the shroud of the Confederacy.

And how did Davis take these two mighty disasters? As his biographer, I would disdain to paint, if I could, the agony they gave him; if I gain him a single friend it must not be through pity. Let it suffice that his heart bled, but did not break; and if I may venture on further familiarity with the reader, it was that kind of courage, going hand in hand with tenderness and refinement, that cheers on this pen. Naturally enough these two terrific disasters were most depressing upon the public. Every enemy that Davis had, opened fire on him and his administration, using Johnston and Beauregard as their barricades. If any one wishes to see with what venom these attacks were made, let him turn to the *Charleston Mercury*, the *Richmond Examiner* and Pollard's "Secret History of the Confederacy." Little did these editors dream of the use to which their contemptuous editorials would be put by vindictive Northern historians to gratify their execration of Davis and the South for the war.

Even Lee was not wholly spared; suffering from their innuendoes, after Gettysburg, on August 8, he asked Davis to accept his resignation and appoint some one else to take his place, stating, what Albert Sydney Johnston had said when under like criticism,

that, for any general commanding an army, it was absolutely essential not only to have the confidence of his troops, but the confidence of the public also, and that with the public the only test of fitness to command was success. Lee closed his letter as follows:

“To your Excellency I am especially indebted for uniform kindness and consideration. You have done everything in your power to aid me in the work committed to my charge, without omitting anything to promote the general welfare. I pray that your efforts may at length be crowned with success, and that you may long live to enjoy the thanks of a grateful people.

With sentiments of great esteem, I am

Very respectfully and truly yours,

ROBERT LEE.”

To this letter Davis replied: “I admit the propriety of your conclusions, that an officer who loses the confidence of his troops should have his position changed, whatever his ability; but when I read the sentence, I was not at all prepared for the application you were about to make. Expressions of discontent in the public journals furnish but little evidence of the sentiment of an army. I wish it were otherwise, even although all the abuse of myself should be accepted as the result of honest observation.

Were you capable of stooping to it, you could

easily surround yourself with those who would fill the Press with your laudations and seek to exalt you for what you have not done, rather than detract from the achievements which will make you and your Army the subject of history for generations to come. . . .

But suppose, my dear friend, that I were to admit with all their implications, the points which you present, where am I to find that new commander who is to possess the greater ability which you believe to be required? I do not doubt the readiness with which you would give way to one who could accomplish all that you have wished, and you will do me the justice to believe that, if Providence should kindly offer such a person for our use, I should not hesitate to avail myself of his services.

My sight is not sufficiently penetrating to discover such hidden merit, if it exists. . . . To ask me to substitute you by some one in my judgment more fit to command, or who would possess more of the confidence of the Army, or of reflecting men in the country, is to demand an impossibility.

It only remains for me to hope that you will take all possible care of yourself, that your health and strength may be entirely restored, and that the Lord will preserve you for the important duties devolved upon you in the struggle of our suffering country for the independence of which we have engaged in war to maintain."

Was there ever a day in the Confederacy's life so momentous for it, or one in the life of Lee and Davis so momentous for them? Where would the star of Lee ride today had Davis yielded to his request, prompted by the subdued yet widespread disaffection, and substituted Johnston or Beauregard, whose friends thought they were his equal? Would Lee be in the country's Hall of Fame? Would the star of Davis be clearing the clouds that have been hanging over him so long? We think not; and history would have lost a precious page, one of those pages in which poetry and glory live.

It is only fair to Davis to repeat what Lee had said: "I am especially indebted for uniform kindness and consideration. You have done everything in your power to aid me in the work committed to my charge, without omitting anything to promote the general welfare." If any two men showed mutual respect and singleness of purpose and recognition of ability, Davis and Lee, from the beginning to the end, maintained that relation to each other.

In no two men of their day, or ever in any day, did the roots of convictions strike deeper, or with wills more indomitable to maintain them, than in Davis and Lee. Both, by barriers inborn, were isolated more or less from their fellow men; each met them, however, with the same urbanity; neither ever thought of gaining their good will or popularity by any affectations of cordiality. But there was

this marked difference between them: Davis, however apparently cold and austere he might be officially, when he mingled with old friends was as warm and free as a boy; while as for Lee, he had the respect, the admiration of every one in official and private life, but, so far as I can learn, no one ever lived who claimed to be on close or intimate terms with him.

A single incident told me by Babcock of Grant's staff and friend of mine, may not be uninteresting. At Appomattox, while the terms of surrender were being copied, Seth Williams, the Adjutant-General of the Army of the Potomac and of whom it has been said, so dearly was he loved, "had a harp in his breast," went up to Lee. He had been his adjutant at West Point when he was superintendent. Lee's face, for a moment, beamed with old-time friendship, but immediately resumed an air of not inviting familiarity or any revival of old relations, and Williams withdrew. In Lee's behalf it must be said it was a trying place and day for him.

Lee was born for high levels, approaching, if not fulfilling, the ideals of his countrymen, North and South. That Davis commanded his loyalty and respect, up to the very last, is a fact which this pen throws into the balance against the charges of his enemies, let it count for what it may. Here is what Lee said, after the war, when asked by a lady his opinion of Davis: "If my opinion is worth anything



you can always say that few people could have done better than Mr. Davis. I knew of none who could have done so well." And Lee had a chance to weigh the abilities of every prominent man in the public life of the South.

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Ch-o-cu That year, 1863, — a year of high combing waves of disasters — closed with the crushing defeat of Bragg at Chattanooga, and in the recesses of the heart of every reflecting Southerner the fate of the Confederacy was sealed. But as a rule he kept it to himself and manifested no willingness to abandon the cause and accept subjugation; ready to fight on, be the odds what they might and the result as humiliating and disastrous as overwhelming defeat could make it. That spirit in Davis was the color-bearer and never quailed; the trumpet for him and for Lee and the self-respecting was the principle involved, a principle — we venture to prophesy — which will be the rallying ground for the people of the United States when the rights under the Constitution are all in the constricting folds of the Lernaean Hydra of complete centralization.

The bells that rang out the old and rang in the new were in one sense glad bells, for although they marked the end of a year of sore, heart-breaking troubles, our natures have a way of comforting us with the thought, "Well, thank God, that year is at last over!" Oh, blessed, youthful, cheery-faced Hope, what a friend you are to us all!

## CHAPTER XX

OF all the years in our country's life, hardly one compares in vital interest and historic significance with 1864. Throughout the South from stormy Cape Hatteras light to the wilds of Texas, throughout the North from Cape Ann with her twin Thacher Island lights to the Pacific, there was a vague consciousness in every home of coming portentous events; one or the other section must go down before the year ended.

That vague consciousness was not confined to our country alone. England and France, the entire Old World, were on their feudal watch towers, so to speak, gazing across the Atlantic in cold, unsympathetic wonder as to which — North or South — would be victorious. And when we think of the grandsons of those who wore the gray and those who wore the blue moving side by side gallantly under the Stars and Stripes to save that Old World's civilization, there is a momentary rekindling in the fagots of the ashes of old fires as we recall the condescending attitude toward us in 1864. England, it was our inheritance of your laws and the inspiring glory of your literature in our common language that drove us to your side on the fields of France.

The outlook for the Confederacy was bad when 1864 threw her New Year doors open; and must have driven sleep away from Davis till a late hour on many a night. The finances were in collapse; the blockade was growing more and more effectual; the supply of medicine for the sick and wounded in the field and for the prisoners in the camps almost exhausted; the North vigorously enforcing its proclamations declaring medicines of all kinds contraband; the gathering of food and supplies for the army more and more difficult through the breaking down of the railroads; in certain quarters of Georgia and North Carolina unmistakable signs of revolt against orders and decrees for the conscription of men and supplies. And, above all, opposition to the administration, led on by several leading newspapers, growing daily more personal and malignant, distracting the public attention, enfeebling the heartbeat of resolution and beclouding the future.

To add to his trials, Bragg's crushing defeat was followed not only by charges against him of incompetency, ill-temper and bad manners, but, what was worse for the morale of the Army, his corps and division commanders fell out among themselves and began accusing each other of misconduct and failure to obey orders. Each headquarters became the breeding place of angry, fault-finding communications to the public and to the War Department. To one of Bragg's whining letters Davis replied:

"It must be a rare occurrence if a battle is fought without many errors and failures, but for which more important results would have been obtained; the experience of these diminishes the credit due, impairs the public confidence, undermines the morale of the Army, and works evil to the cause for which brave men have died and for which others have the same sacrifice to make."

To one of Bragg's grumbling officers he wrote: "In this hour of our country's greatest need, when so much depends upon the harmonious coöperation of all the agents, I feel that I may confidently ask of those who have so often illustrated their patriotism by gallant deeds upon the field, that they will not allow personal antipathies to impair their usefulness to the public service." It is difficult to see how rebuke could have been made less offensive or appeal more impressive.

Meanwhile, Johnston who had relieved Bragg, and Lee confronted by Meade on the Rapidan, were begging for food and clothing; thousands of the faithful, heroic men were without overcoats or shoes and the winter was unusually severe. Lee's letters to his family and the War Department, the diaries and the newspapers tell the wants and suffering of the southern armies. Moreover the North was gathering an immense army under Sherman to attack Johnston and one under Grant to attack Lee as soon as winter was over. From

any point of view the situation called for patience, courage and fortitude.

In February, upon the reënlistment of veteran regiments, Davis issued a feeling address to the Army in which he said: "Would that it were possible to render my thanks to you in person, and in the name of our common country as well as my own, while pressing the hand of each war-worn veteran to recognize his title to our love, gratitude and admiration. With pride and affection my heart has accompanied you on every march, with solicitude it has sought to minister to your every want, with exultation it has marked your every heroic achievement." He closed saying: "Citizen defenders of the home, the liberties and the altars of the Confederacy! That the God whom we all humbly worship may shield you with His fatherly care and preserve you for safe return to the peaceful enjoyment of your friends and the associations of those you most love, is the earnest prayer of your Commander-in-Chief."

It is said that what comes from the heart goes to the heart; and why?; because there are spirits whom God has given homes in the breast who clear the way. And is that address hushed and gone forever? Oh, no! it is speaking from every monument in the Southland. Defeat, as a rule, has been but another word for oblivion, but not so in the war between North and South; magnanimity and battlefield born esteem have made it an honored guest of victory.

While Davis was straining every nerve to meet the impending dangers and under a galling fire of criticism, on April 30, "Joseph Emory, the most beautiful and the brightest of our children," says Mrs. Davis in her "Memoirs," "fell while playing on an upper gallery, down on a brick pavement and was almost instantly killed." A despatch came to Davis as he sat heartbroken by the dead child, and in trying to write an answer stopped and stared at his wife, asking in soft tones, "Did you tell me what was in it?" and laid down his pen saying "I must have this day with my little child."

On the morning after the funeral in sweet Hollywood, Sherman took up his march for Atlanta, Butler sailed up the James for Richmond, Siegal struck up the Shenandoah Valley, and Grant crossed the Rapidan. That was a bright, bird-singing May morning and I remember it well as the sunshine fell on the waving colors. Lee with the valiant army of Northern Virginia struck Grant in the Wilderness.

Let the fields of that battle summer — the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Kenesaw Mountain, Atlanta, Franklin and Nashville, tell their story. We believe there are no battlefields on this green earth that can tell a like one, have like memories, or a pride so exulting or affectionate in the forces that on them contested for victory. All spoke the same language, all had the same ideals, all the same faith in and attachment

to constitutional government "of and by the people." We are sure that on the anniversary nights of any one of these battlefields, the others send up a cheer as they catch the gleam of the magic camp fires in the bending sky.

The first twenty days of May were days of intense pressure on Davis and full of strange fate for the Confederacy. For example, on the fifth the battle of the Wilderness began; on the sixth Longstreet, Lee's right-hand man, was wounded within a mile and a half of where Jackson in that same Wilderness fell and under almost identical circumstances, just as victory was within the grasp of Lee.

When Butler came within striking distance of Richmond, Davis joined Beauregard in repulsing his advance and driving him back into his works at Bermuda Hundred.

On the tenth Sheridan, who had left Spotsylvania to cut Lee's communications, defeated Stuart at Yellow Tavern, and was within gunshot of Richmond. Davis hurried home from his office, armed himself and rode to the front, urging by his presence the mixed commands defending the city to higher displays, if possible, of courage, and who finally drove Sheridan away. Davis then went to the bedside of the gallant Stuart who had been mortally wounded, and taking his hand said, "How do you feel, General." Stuart replied, "Easy, but willing to die if God and my country think I have fulfilled

my destiny and done my duty." Mrs. Davis says in her "Memoirs" that that night her husband on bended knees entreated God that the precious life might be spared to our needy country, but that night he died. Stuart was only thirty-one years old, and of a joyous nature. He lies with Davis in Hollywood Cemetery.

Richmond, through the superb gallantry of Lee's army, was safe for that summer; but not so Atlanta. Sherman with his superior numbers was outflanking and forcing Johnston to fall back from one position to another. If Lee, Grant, Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, or Hampton had been in Johnston's place we think Sherman would have had to fight for his life long before he reached the Etowah and Chattahoochee. The public of all that territory, the granary of supplies of food for Lee as well as Johnston, began to besiege Davis with urgent, almost indignant inquiries as to whether Johnston was to fall back forever without giving battle, finally posting a delegate to Richmond to lay before him their anxieties and manifest dangers. Thereupon Davis sent Bragg to interview Johnston as to his plans, he was then within sound of the church bells of Atlanta. Johnston giving Bragg no assurance of taking the offensive or defending the city to the last, Davis relieved him and put Hood in command, who at once gave battle, met with defeat, and Atlanta was given up to Sherman.



Davis then visited Hood and addressed his Army, reviving its cast-down resolution, and Hood struck off with it to cut Sherman's communications, and, by one of the merest chances of war, lost gaining a victory over the forces left by Sherman who had headed for Savannah.

In August, Farragut, lashed to his mast, forced his entrance by Forts Morgan and Gaines into Mobile Bay and captured the Confederate iron-clad *Tennessee*. In September, Sheridan swept Early from the Shenandoah Valley; in December, Hood was utterly defeated at Nashville and on Christmas Day, Savannah fell ringing the knell of the Confederacy. Thus ended that battle summer. But, unfortunately, while it was going on and the armies were making a record of stirring valor, another record was being made, not of glory but of shame and sorrow, impeaching the humanity of South and North. Namely, the ghastly suffering and frightful death roll in the prison camps of both sections, mainly through the suspension of exchange, which calls for a chapter of its own.

## CHAPTER XXI

IN 1876 when the pre-war fraternal relations between North and South were beginning to revive, a resolution extending universal amnesty was offered in Congress. James G. Blaine, a brilliant, magnetic man and a prospective presidential candidate of the Republican Party, declared, in the discussion of the resolution, that Davis was the author "knowingly, deliberately and wilfully of the gigantic murder and crime of Andersonville," where in that summer and autumn of 1864 the mortality of Federal prisoners was shocking in the extreme. This charge iterated and reiterated for years by politicians, playing as he for the old soldier vote, found its way into the histories of the war, leaving on the mind of every schoolboy who read them a lasting impression that Davis was guilty of the alleged crime. In behalf of justice, fair dealing, and the integrity of history, let us give the facts.

The first Confederate prisoners taken in the war, May, 1861, were the officers and crew of the *Savannah*, a Charleston pilot boat fitted out as a privateer and sailing under letters of marque and reprisal. They were immediately imprisoned, some put in irons, and subsequently all brought before the courts, charged with piracy and treason.

As soon as this was known, Mr. Davis by one of his aides sent a letter to Mr. Lincoln saying, after rehearsing the treatment of the officers and crew as given in the newspapers: "It is the desire of this Government so to conduct the war now existing as to mitigate its horrors as far as may be possible, and, with this intent its treatment of the prisoners captured by its forces [referring to those taken in the battle of Big Bethel] has been marked by the greatest humanity and leniency consonant with public obligation. Some have been permitted to return home, others to remain at large, and all have been furnished with rations for their subsistence such as we allowed to our own troops."

He then went on to say: "A just regard to humanity and to the honor of this Government requires me to state explicitly that, painful as will be the necessity, this Government will deal out to the prisoners held by it the same treatment and the same fate as shall be experienced by those captured on the *Savannah*; and if driven to the terrible necessity of retaliation, that retaliation will be extended so far as shall be requisite to secure the abandonment of a practice unknown to the warfare of civilized man and so barbarous as to disgrace the nation which shall be guilty of inaugurating it. With this view and because it may not have reached you, I renew the proposition made to the

Commander of the blockade squadron, to exchange for the prisoners . . . an equal number, now held by us, according to rank."

The bearer of this letter was not allowed an interview with Mr. Lincoln, and no answer ever was made.

That his repugnance for retaliation was deep and inborn, is beyond question. Here to that effect is one of a sheaf of testimony that might be given; it is in a letter to the *London Times* by Benjamin.

"For the four years during which I was one of his most trusted advisers, the recipient of his confidence and the sharer, to the best of my abilities, in his labors and responsibilities, I learnt to know him perhaps better than any other living man. Neither in private conversation nor in Cabinet council have I ever heard him utter an unworthy thought or ungenerous sentiment. . . It was urged [in a special case from Missouri, the McNeil case] not only by friends, but by members of his Cabinet in Council also, that it was his duty to repress such an outrage by retaliation; he was immovable in resistance of such counsels, insisting it was repugnant to any sense of justice and humanity that the innocent should be made the victims for the crimes of such monsters."

Again in the same letter Benjamin said, in referring to the prisoners in the Dahlgren raid, upon whom

the people called for execution, papers having been found on his body after the repulse and capture of many of his party, authorizing the burning of Richmond and the killing of Davis and members of his Cabinet, "A discussion [in the Cabinet] which became so heated as almost to create unfriendly feeling, by reason of the unshaken firmness of Mr. Davis in maintaining that, although those men merited a refusal to grant them quarter in the heat of battle, yet they had been received to mercy by their captors as prisoners of war, and, as such, were sacred; and that we should be dishonored if harm should overtake them after their surrender. To Jefferson Davis and to his constancy of purpose did those men owe their safety, in spite of hostile public opinion and in opposition to two-thirds of his Cabinet."

Davis of North Carolina, who succeeded Benjamin as Attorney-General, said on one occasion after the war: "I do not think I am a very cruel man but I declare to you that it was the most difficult thing in the world to keep Mr. Davis up to the measure of justice. He wanted to pardon everybody. If ever a wife, a mother or a sister got into his presence, it took but a little while for their tears to wash out the record."

As will be remembered the battle of Bull Run was fought July 21, and many of our men fell into the hands of the South. In the autumn relatives

and friends began to implore for their release, and both Houses of Congress requested Mr. Lincoln to take steps immediately to that end. To avoid official recognition of the belligerent Confederacy as a nation, he appointed two Commissioners empowered not expressly to make an exchange but to visit the prisoners and provide for their wants and comfort.

Of course these Commissioners were not allowed to cross the Confederate lines, for reasons that will occur to any thoughtful reader; but the Southern officials they met under flags of truce manifested such a frank readiness for entering upon some sort of a general arrangement of exchange that they agreed to a temporary cartel, which was subsequently approved at Washington. Some months later, in February, 1862, a formal cartel was entered into by Howell Cobb on the part of the South and General Wool of the North, providing for the exchange, man for man, within a short time after capture, and any surplus on either side to be released on parole.

This cartel for a while, or as long as the South had a surplus of prisoners, was carried out in fairly good faith by both sides, although its operation and continuance were seriously interfered with by Butler hanging Mumford, a citizen of New Orleans, on Saturday June 7, 1862, at thirteen minutes before eleven a.m., in the presence of a vast crowd, for

hauling down and trampling on the flag; by Davis proclaiming Butler a felon and authorizing his execution if captured in retaliation for Mumford; and by Pope's orders which have already been mentioned. The status of the recaptured slaves also complicated the carrying out of its terms.

At length because of the death and suffering of so many of our prisoners at Belle Isle and because the exchange was blocked by contentions of one kind or another, Davis, July 2, 1863 — the battle of Gettysburg was going on — asked Stephens, his Vice-President, to go to Washington under flag of truce and lay before Mr. Lincoln, if he could see him, all the difficulties in the situation; to arrange and settle all differences and disputes which had arisen in the execution of the cartel; to agree to any modification of its terms as might be found necessary; and, finally, "to enter into such arrangements or understanding about the mode of carrying on hostilities as should confine the severities of the war within such limits as were rightfully imposed not only by modern civilization, but also by our common Christianity."

Mr. Stephens was not allowed to pass the lines, and when the object of his mission was telegraphed to Washington, the War Department, fully appreciating by this time the significance of Lee's repulse at Gettysburg, curtly replied: "The customary agents and channels are adequate for all needful

communication and conferences between the United States and the insurgents." Had Pickett broken through and the old Army of the Potomac been defeated, would Stephens have been allowed to cross our lines? Oh, yes; would such a contemptuous answer have been sent? Oh, no, and the gates of every prison camp, South and North, would have swung wide open.

With the repulse of Lee and the surrender of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the tide turned as to surplus of prisoners, the cartel broke wide apart; all exchanges were suspended, and the cry from prison camps was pitiful.

The Commissioners, Federal and Confederate, at once began charging each other with the responsibility for wrecking that humane agreement. After weighing the evidence we are constrained to deny entire innocence to either. Technically, in reference to the slaves recaptured, the North had decidedly the best defence; but, on the other hand, the South was far more frank, generous and consistent.

Notwithstanding the cartel's official suspension, special exchanges dribbled along till Grant took command of the Army in the spring of 1864. Before moving on Lee he visited Butler, then at the head of the Department of Eastern Virginia and North Carolina, who, with his usual assumption of power, had entered into arrangements with Judge Ould, the Confederate Commissioner of Prisoners, for



renewal of exchange. Grant, on learning what had been done, forbade any further exchanges. In August, while before Petersburg, he wrote to Butler, who had again, without any authority so to do, surreptitiously reopened negotiations with the Confederate Commissioner: "It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man released, on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us, either directly or indirectly. If we commence a system of exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught, they amount to no more than as many dead men. At this time to release all rebel prisoners North would insure Sherman's defeat and would compromise our safety here."

This letter is the highest testimonial that was ever paid to the gallantry of Lee's army. Grant's losses from the day we crossed the Rapidan, the fourth of May, till the date of this letter in August, had almost, if not quite, equalled Lee's entire strength at the outset of the campaign; and it was the memory of these losses that beat down, for the moment, the charitable impulses of Grant's nature. When the immediate dangers were over, it will be seen that he was true to himself and extended every facility for the welfare of the prisoners of both sides.

At this point it is only due to Butler to say that no man, North or South, did more, not one even approached him in persistent endeavor to effect exchange and thereby save thousands of lives; and we have no doubt that in the meditative hours of old age these efforts, clothed in beauty, came back to comfort him.

When Grant's letter to Butler prohibiting further exchange became known in the prison camps, South and North, hope fled; cold-eyed despair took her chair beside the hospital cots; shallow graves soon welcomed the pale, homesick, emaciated youths; and from then on almost every hour of day and night, from Andersonville and Salisbury, from Rock Island and Elmira, their spirits were flying upward, duly exchanged; yes, duly exchanged to join the army of the blessed.

All the autumn and early winter of 1864 the death rate at Andersonville was especially shocking; and at every other Southern camp as well as at every Northern camp it was heavy. The South maintained that it did the best it could; that its supplies of medicine were exhausted and its supply of food reduced to barely enough to keep soul and body together in its army; which I know to be true from the haversacks of the dead on the fields of Spotsylvania and Petersburg.

It is a matter of fact, Confederate authorities throughout that autumn when the captives were

falling like the leaves of a white ash the morning after a frost, plead and plead for exchange, offering at last to let every one go home without equivalent. The South can without fear or hesitation appeal to the official War Records as to the desire and will of the Confederate War Department to mitigate the horrible conditions.

Authors of repute have seen fit to incorporate in their histories of the war, moving accounts of the suffering in the Southern camps and the ghastly spectacle of their victims; accompanied, furthermore, by extracts from letters, written by prominent persons to Davis, protesting conditions in some of the camps as a shame and dishonor; thereby, with infernal malice, thrusting him into the picture with all its speaking condemnation. But they have not described the like suffering or the ghastly spectacle of the hollow-eyed prisoners in Northern camps, on delivery; nor have they given extracts from letters written by clergymen and men of prominence to Mr. Lincoln, censuring him for refusal to exchange, all of which can be found in the same volume of official War Records. Much of the reports by Committees of Congress, Federal and Confederate, as to the condition of camps and the appearance of returned prisoners, was mere war propaganda; and, as such, is unreliable, carrying with it, as that of all wars, the seeds of its own early decay.

If, as has been said before, Mr. Davis is to be held

responsible for the dead Northern prisoners merely because he was Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate armies, may not Mr. Lincoln by similar reasoning be held responsible for the Southern dead in Northern prison camps?

A word, now, as to the records of deaths and the number of prisoners. They were first brought to light by Hill of Georgia replying to Blaine's charge. He gave the figures of the deaths as reported by Stanton in response to a request of Congress: "Confederate dead in Northern prisons 26,436. Union dead in Southern prisons 22,576." As to the number of prisoners, Hill referred to a report of Surgeon-General Barnes, claiming that it, as well as Stanton's report, was available for the inspection of any member of the House. Barnes gave: "Total prisoners held in North 220,000; held by the South 270,000." Blaine and Garfield in their reply on the following day did not deny the existence of this report; Garfield said that he had had a note from Surgeon-General Barnes relative to the figures in it, which seems to confirm its existence at that time.

Twenty-seven years after, when the celebrated historian Rhodes asked the then surgeon-general for a copy of the Barnes Report, he was told there was no such document in the War Department; and to my request for a copy, I was so informed. What became of it? It is possible that Barnes, finding his figures unreliable, withdrew his report; but that he

did make such a report is beyond the shadow of doubt. My only excuse for bringing in its contested figures is to defend Mr. Davis from a charge that in the main was untrue and did him much wrong.

Finally let me avow there has been no point in this narrative that I have dwelt upon with so little pleasure. For in all reason, propriety and self-respect I submit that the day for the discussion of the treatment of prisoners, South and North, has long gone by. In the winged language of the gifted Sir Thomas Browne, "Let us write our wrongs in ashes; draw the curtain of night on our injuries; shut them up in the tower of oblivion and let them be as though they had not been." So then, let us leave this disgrace where it lies — off, off to one side in the graveyard of our country's history. She laments the record, it was not creditable to either section.

## CHAPTER XXII

IN the South, from the earliest Colonial times, New Year's, for high and low, young and old, white and black, had been the culmination of a week of hospitality, family visiting, feasting and happiness; outdoor sports during the day, dancing at night in cabin and manor-house, which were decked with mistletoe, ferns and holly.

But not so the week ending January 1, 1865. There was not a home in which was rejoicing. Crutches and empty chairs had taken the place of mistletoe and holly. Many had lost one or more soldier sons, and instead of joy and plenty, sorrow and want looked in at the window when the evening lamp or candle was lit. Bare chimneys, torn gardens and fire-scorched dooryard trees were all that was left of hundreds of field and flock-overlooking mansions. Where Festivity was wont to hold her holiday of joy, War's Furies were having one of their orgies on the track of desolation that Sherman had left in his relentless march. The fate of the Confederacy, — when would the war end — was the one all-absorbing topic before the fireside of every home; nothing else was talked about; grave care never left the doorway nor the pillow.

But that was not all, nor the worst of it, by any means. The mighty soldier, public opinion, had lost heart, and the humble, who had risked all they had — their lives — for the Confederacy were cast down and low in mind, wondering if God had turned His face away from their cause.

It was a dark, sore time for the South; and what filled her cup with wormwood and gall was the fact that the Governors of several States, under the cloak of law, were stabbing the body politic; many ambitious, jealous and disappointed politicians and impatient fiery editors had turned fault-finders and were sowing broadcast the seed of discord and gloom.

The spirit of the Confederacy, that up to that time had been their welcome and honored guest, now in sorrow quitted their querulous firesides for the hearths of her more steadfast friends and for the campfires of her gallant lovers with the colors. But since only here and there a ragged fragment was left of her armies that had so valiantly contested the battlefields of Shiloh, Perryville, Stone River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Atlanta, Franklin and Nashville, there was no place for her to find a soldier home save in Richmond, Johnston's and Lee's armies.

On the first day of January then, 1865, there was widespread, peevish disaffection; and confidence in ultimate success had given way to despair in many

a household. Sherman was on his devastating, triumphant march with more than twice as many men as his adversary. Grant was only waiting for spring to attack Lee. Wilmington, the last port, was about to be closed. Available supplies of food and clothing were almost exhausted. The situation, to lookers-on, seemed, and almost was, hopeless; only a matter of weeks and months now till the South would have to lay down its arms. In other words, at the beck of its conquerors it would have to come under the yoke, a contingency, which for four years it had fought against and dreaded, subjugation to a section that it had reason to fear was revengeful.

To this day there are people in the world (and some are in the South) who wonder, in view of the inevitable downfall of the Confederacy, that Davis did not own up to defeat and ask for terms. Terms! terms! if suffrage to the emancipated slaves should be insisted upon; if high officials in or out of the army should not be eligible for Congress, who would or could carry them out? Of all the phases in the life of the Confederacy, not one opens upon such a field of speculation. But mark my word, whoever enters it will soon find himself in a labyrinth of delusive, contingent possibilities, not a path he can take that will lead him to certainty, all ending in miry, tangled political swamps, so to speak, or to the brink of anarchy.

It may be that a wiser mind than mine can enter



this labyrinth and find a way out that would justify asking for terms, but I cannot find such an one and am convinced that it was better, far better for the South as well as the North, and above all for our country at large, that Davis did not ask for terms and stood by the ship until she went down.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to give an account of the Hampton Roads Conference where, on February 3, 1865, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward met commissioners appointed by Davis to confer upon bringing the war to an end. The Conference was the outcome of a visit by Mr. F. P. Blair, Senior, of Washington, D. C., to Davis in Richmond. Blair was a boyhood friend of Davis at Transylvania, the editor of the *Globe* in Washington when Davis was Secretary of War and Senator, a sagacious politician, had pulled the stroke oar in every contest between Whig and Democrat for thirty years, and was then on intimate and confidential terms with Mr. Lincoln.

His pass through Grant's lines was as follows, written on a card: "Allow the bearer, F. P. Blair, Senior, to pass our lines, go South and return. A. Lincoln." Manifestly he and Mr. Lincoln had talked the matter over more than once.

From his manuscript giving an account of his interview, it appears that the scheme he had worked out in the long hours of his old age for reuniting the sections was to assert the Monroe Doctrine and have the armies of North and South march to

Mexico and drive out Maximilian, whom Napoleon III had placed on the throne with a view of making Mexico a colonial dependency of France. The armies' common experiences in the campaign into Mexico and the turning of public attention away from immediate home questions, Mr. Blair believed, would give a chance for the renewal of old ties.

After fully unfolding his scheme in his interview with Davis, he observed: "There is my problem, Mr Davis; do you think it possible to be solved?" Davis after consideration replied: "I think so." Touching the project of bringing the sections together, Davis thought the great difficulty was the excessive vindictiveness produced by outrages perpetrated in the invaded States during the war. "In relation to the vindictiveness produced by the war," says Blair, "I thought he was mistaken in supposing it would be attended with great difficulty in producing reconciliation between the States and the people."

Blair goes on in his manuscript to tell what had happened in passing through the lines as a proof of early reconciliation, that the soldiers had manifested no unfriendly feelings; that Captain Deacon of Boston, who carried him through the lines to deliver him over to Captain Davis of South Carolina, drew his bottle from his bag and proposed to drink his health; that they drank with mutual good will and gave each other their hands. "This spirit of magnanimity exists in the soldiers of both sides. It is only

the politicians and those who profit or hope to profit by the disasters of war who indulge in acrimony. Mr. Davis said that what I remarked was very just in the main."

In reply to Blair's holding out the fame Davis would acquire by bringing peace, he replied: "What his name might be in history he cared not, if he could restore the prosperity and happiness of his country; that was the end and aim of his being. He said I ought to know with what reluctance he had been drawn out of the Union; that he had followed the old flag longer and with more devotion than anything on earth; that when the flag unfurled itself in the breeze [at Bull Run] he saw it with a sigh."

A memorandum was made of the interview and when written out was submitted to Mr. Blair, "and," says Mr. Davis in the "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy", "altered in so far as he desired in any respect, to change the expressions employed." Mr. Blair was given a copy and authorized to show it to Mr. Lincoln.

The last sentence of this memorandum was as follows: "Our conference ended with no other result than an agreement that he would learn whether Mr. Lincoln would adopt his [Mr. Blair's] project and send or receive Commissioners to negotiate for a peaceful solution of the questions at issue; that he would report to him my readiness to enter upon negotiations; and that I knew of no insurmountable

obstacles to such a treaty of peace as would secure greater advantages to both parties than any result which arms could achieve."

Davis gave a letter to Mr. Blair saying: "I have no disposition to find obstacles in forms and am willing, now as heretofore, to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace, to send or receive Commissioners . . . and renew the effort to enter into conference with a view to secure peace to the two countries."

Mr. Blair, upon submitting this letter to Mr. Lincoln, received from him a reply as follows: "Sir: You having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the twelfth instant, you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now, and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other influential person now resisting the National authority may informally send to me with a view of securing peace to the people of our common country. Yours, etc., A. Lincoln."

Blair returned to Richmond and gave Davis this letter, and in the course of their talk Blair suggested that Lee and Grant might enter into an arrangement by which hostilities would be suspended and the way paved for ending the war. Davis told him that he "would willingly intrust to General Lee such negotiations as were indicated," and, subsequently Lee, at his suggestion, wrote to Grant for an interview with that end in view; Grant replied wisely

that he had no power to bind the North, that the matter was wholly in the hands of civil authorities.

Mr. Blair, during his two visits to Richmond, had met and talked freely with many of his old friends and political associates now members of the Confederate Congress or connected with Departments; and here let me observe that there was no man so open-hearted in the world as the old-time Southerner once he was sure of the sincerity of his companion. So then, they withheld nothing of their hopes or fears from their aged friend, and doubtless freely confessed that the tide was strong against them; in fact, it only had to rise a little higher and they were done for. But the great question they put to Mr. Blair was, What terms will the North give? Blair assured them that Lincoln was inclined to treat them generously, every drop of his blood was Southern, conservative and not radical, beside he was naturally kind-hearted. The result was that such a fervent sentiment for opening negotiations with Lincoln for peace set in, that Davis had to take the matter up, although from the very outset he had little faith in success, for the reason that, when it actually came to concrete terms, it would not be Mr. Lincoln the South would have to deal with, but Stanton and the forceful, radical members of Congress. However, he appointed Vice-President Stephens of Georgia, to whom Lincoln had virtually offered a position in his Cabinet, Hunter of Virginia, an

ex-United States Senator, and John A. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War, and ex-member of the Supreme Court of the United States, a Commission to go to Washington with the following certificate of appointment: "In conformity with the letter of Mr. Lincoln of which the foregoing is a copy, you are requested to proceed to Washington City for an informal conference with him upon the issues involved in the existing war, and for the purpose of securing peace to the two countries."

Benjamin, Davis' Secretary of State, had drawn up a much more diplomatic form of appointment: "You are requested to proceed to Washington City for conference with him [Mr. Lincoln] upon the subject to which it relates." Davis made a serious mistake in modifying Benjamin's draft — more than one of my unconverted friends has characterized it as "a h — ll of a mistake," and for the sake of good fellowship I never found fault with their amendment. However, after the war was over, Benjamin, in reply to a letter from Davis as to the reasons given by him to the Cabinet when the draft was submitted, says that he [Davis] contended if the words "two countries" were left out, it would be a virtual concession from the head of the Confederacy that it had abandoned its claim for existence, had been a mere factional rebellion and would be so argued if the case ever came before the Courts. Benjamin approved the change of language.

Nevertheless we think it was a mistake, for under whatever certificate of appointment his Commissioners might meet Mr. Lincoln or Commissioners he might appoint, the terms would not have been other than they were, and Davis would have had the same reasons for refusing to accept them and thereby would have escaped the charge of obstinacy. It goes without saying, that Davis never was made for a diplomat; and so far as the nature of the issue involved, it was mighty lucky for the Confederacy and the country he was not; for a diplomat, as soon as Vicksburg fell, would have patched up some sort of a peace that would have lasted but a little while, and war broken out again more bitterly than before between the sections.

On the third day of February, 1865, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward had a conference with the Confederate Commission on board a vessel in Hampton Roads off Fort Monroe. The upshot of it all was that the Southern forces should lay down their arms and go home, accept the abolition of slavery as an irrevocable fact, with an assurance of freedom from penalties of all kinds so far as Lincoln could secure them, and their States admitted to representation as of old in Congress.

The Confederate Commission urged more explicit terms, but Mr. Lincoln could not and wisely did not pledge himself to anything more explicit and parted with them as friends and not enemies. They went

home disconsolate and had to report that no extended armistice would be allowed, no treaty or agreement leading to ultimate settlement between the Confederate or individual States would be considered, because that would be a recognition of their existence as a separate country, that there was nothing left for them but unconditional submission. In view of all that had happened in the four years of war, we think they had no right to expect anything else.

On February 6, Davis wrote to Senator Hill of Georgia: "The Commissioners have returned. They met Lincoln and Seward at Fortress Monroe, were informed that neither the Confederate States nor an individual State could be recognized as having power to enter any agreement presenting the conditions of peace. Nothing less would be accepted than unconditional submission to the Government and laws of the United States, and that Congress had adopted a Constitutional Amendment for the emancipation of all the slaves, which disposed of that question."

On the same day, in obedience to an Act of Congress, Lee was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the armies and in acknowledging his appointment to the Adjutant-General said: "I am indebted alone to the kindness of his Excellency, the President, for my nomination to the high and arduous office and wish I had the ability to fill it to advantage." As a matter of fact his appointment was made by the newspapers and a cabal in the Confederate Congress inimical to



Davis that had secured the passage of the Act. On the fourteenth, Lee issued a general order to the Army, saying: "The choice between war and abject submission is before them. To such a proposal, brave men with arms in their hands can have but one answer. They cannot barter manhood for peace, nor the right of self-government for life or property."

Meanwhile mass meetings, stirred to the deepest enthusiasm by Davis and others, had been held in Richmond, protesting unwillingness to accept subjugation and determination to fight it out to the last. That Davis rose to a great height in eloquence on these occasions was conceded by his bitterest enemies. But never was defiant eloquence more fatefully thrown away or so futile; the eyes of the dying Confederacy were glazing, and all that it accomplished was to focus on him the responsibility of the entire South for the war, and to increase in the North a will to punish and reluctance to forgive.

But suppose he had made an apology or expressed hopes for charity, what a figure this would have been and how scorned by every battlefield where the banners of the Confederacy had been carried! Nature loves her peaceful, ranging hills with their rich valleys of waving grain and grazing flocks, but she calls on the sturdy granite to face an angry sea.

## CHAPTER XXIII

IN desperation over the Peace Conference, and the black oncoming cloud of defeat turning gray showing it had a tempest in its breast, a measure to free all slaves who would enlist was passed by the Congress with the approval of Davis and Lee. But it was altogether too late, as well as the offer Davis made to England to free every slave if she would acknowledge the independence of the Confederacy. The negroes, with good sense, paid no attention to the offer of Congress, for they knew right well that freedom was coming to them, without shedding a drop of their own blood or that of any one. Their course was no disappointment to Davis and he never found fault with them, nor is there any evidence that he grew petulant or despondent over the failure of the whites who, for one reason or another, turned a deaf ear to Lee's appeal to come back into the ranks again where they were needed so much. Let this be said for Davis, that while he was sensitive, over-sensitive, to any disrespect or reflection on his honor, he never gave way to ill-natured disappointment over the conduct of any one, but he would wonder over the lack of spirit in the face of trial. As for himself, dark as the hour was, he met the

world, in his home or on the street, with the same unfailing natural courtesy. His face was paler and care sat on his brow, but the Peace Conference had not benumbed but had, in fact, stimulated his will.

In the early morning of March 25, after long consultation with Davis over the situation, Lee made a well studied assault on Grant's line near the Appomattox with a view to compel him to pull back his left, which threatened Lee's only way of safe withdrawal toward Johnston, who was confronting Sherman in North Carolina. Gordon, who made the attack, was not supported as was planned and met with defeat. He was a strikingly handsome man with very black hair, fair temples and something superb in his bearing. Like Lee, McPherson and Hancock he seemed to carry glory with him to the battlefield.

Instead of pulling back his lines, Grant, the most modest and sweetly attractive man that ever wore a uniform, fathoming Lee's design, pushed forward and captured Five Forks. That victory was won on a lowery Saturday afternoon, April 1, and on Sunday forenoon the sun was shining and the people of Richmond were on their way to church. Lee sent a despatch to Davis that he would withdraw that night all troops in the lines of Petersburg and Richmond.

Davis was in St. Paul's — it was communion Sunday — when a messenger brought in the despatch. He at once withdrew and, that night toward mid-

night, boarded a train for Danville. The last command from Lee's army from the lines around Richmond passed through its streets and crossed the James just before daybreak on its way to Appomattox, and when the sun rose the capital of the Old Dominion was on fire and her people in tears.

The train Davis was on with his Cabinet and Congressmen and others whose homes were not in Virginia was long and heavy. The engine, like the Confederacy, had seen its best day and its speed was slow; the news that he was aboard outran it, and wondering crowds gathered at every station, crying to see him. He addressed them in confident terms, saying that, although the capital had fallen, Lee's indomitable old army was still in the field and, if they would still keep up their courage, and those who were able would rally to the colors and meet the enemy with the bravery of old, all would be well at last.

On the fifth of April, from Danville, he issued a proclamation in which he said: "It would be unwise to conceal the moral and material injury to our cause resulting from the occupation of our capital by the enemy. It is equally unwise and unworthy of us to allow our own energies to falter and our efforts to become relaxed under reverses however calamitous they may be. . . . It is for us, my countrymen, to show, by our bearing under reverses, how wretched has been the self-deception of those

who have believed us less able to endure misfortune with fortitude than to encounter danger with courage. . . . Animated by that confidence in your spirit of fortitude which never failed me yet, I announce to you, my fellow-countrymen, that it is my purpose to maintain your cause with my whole heart and soul, that I never will consent to abandon to the enemy one foot of the soil of any of the States of the Confederacy. Let us, then, not despair but, relying on God, meet the foe with fresh defiance and with unconquered, unconquerable hearts."

The Dan that flows by Danville and is born in the Alleghenies is a pleasant river to see, with its big willows and adjacent farms. Along its banks spring was weaving her bridal veil; new-shorn sheep were grazing in stump-dotted pastures; the crescent-breasted lark, the catbird and the mocking bird were singing light-heartedly, but Davis' heart was not light as he looked over the fields along the Dan. Those were long and anxious days for him. His first thought in the morning and the last at night was, How is it going with Lee and his gallant old army of Gettysburg, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania?

Not hearing a word, he could stand it no longer and sent young Wise, the author of that fascinating book, "The End of an Era," to Lee for tidings. Wise found Lee at Farmville pushing on with his heroic army, its banners, that had waved triumphant on many battlefields, still flying, but its corps

reduced to mere remnants, tired, hungry and hopeless, yet displaying that soldierly steadfastness which lights the last days of the Confederacy with enduring glory. That was on Friday and on Sunday forenoon — it was Palm Sunday — at Appomattox the end came.

Meanwhile, Davis with his Cabinet had gone to Greensboro, North Carolina, to be near Johnston and Beauregard. Young Robert E. Lee, who had been cut off in the retreat, had made his way thither and was in the room with Davis when the official despatch announcing his father's surrender was received. In his "Recollections" of his father young Lee says: "After reading it he [Davis] handed it without comment to us; then turning away, he silently wept bitter tears."

Jehovah! Designer of the starry firmament, this green world and human nature, that fountain which begins to play when what we dearly love is gone forever seems to testify to your live and daily compassion for us poor mortals!

That night Davis having sent word that he wanted to see them, Johnston and Beauregard came to his room where he and his Cabinet were assembled. "I have requested you," so writes his Secretary of the Navy, Mallory, "to join us this evening that we might have the benefit of your views upon the situation of the country. Of course, we all feel the magnitude of the moment. Our late disasters are terrible,

but I do not think we should regard them as fatal. I think we can whip the enemy yet if our people will turn out; we must look at the matter calmly, however, and see what there is left for us to do." He then turned to Johnston, saying: "We should like to hear your views, General Johnston." Johnston blurted out: "My views are, Sir, that our people are tired of the war, feel themselves whipped and will not fight," and went on to say that the men were deserting in large numbers, and suggested that terms for surrender should be asked for. Davis, meanwhile, was folding and unfolding a bit of paper, and then turned to Beauregard for his views, who replied that he concurred in all that Johnston had said. Then followed a silence, Davis' eyes still on the bit of paper he was folding and refolding. At last, without a sign of impatience either in his manner or the expression of his face or tone, he asked Johnston if he thought Sherman would give terms and if so, to proceed, adding: "If we can accomplish any good for the country, Heaven knows I am not particular as to forms." As we all know, Johnston accepted Sherman's terms and surrendered his army.

While these negotiations were going on Davis went to Salisbury, North Carolina, accepting the hospitality of an Episcopal clergyman. One morning while at breakfast the clergyman's little daughter, seven or eight years old, came in crying, "Oh,

Papa! old Lincoln's coming and going to kill us all." Mr. Davis laid down his knife and fork, placed his hand on the little girl's head and turning it around toward him said, looking into her face: "Oh, no, my little lady, you need not fear that; Mr. Lincoln is not such a bad man as that; he does not want to kill anybody and certainly not a little girl like you."

A few days after came a rumor of Mr. Lincoln's assassination but Davis doubted its truthfulness, observing, however, that in such a condition of public affairs a crime of that kind might be perpetrated. When the news was confirmed, Mallory reports him as saying: "I certainly had no special regard for Mr. Lincoln, but there are a great many men of whose end I would much rather hear than his. I fear it will be disastrous to our people, and I regret it deeply."

Upon hearing the unconditional surrender of Johnston's and Beauregard's army, Davis set out to join the forces still in the field beyond the Mississippi. The specie that was in the Confederate treasury, amounting to several hundred thousand dollars, was transferred from the railway box cars into army wagons and, guarded by detachments of Wheeler's cavalry, the march began. With Davis rode Mallory, Reagan, Benjamin and Breckinridge of his Cabinet. They crossed the Savannah River on the fourth of May; Davis, Mallory and Reagan accompanied by Captain Campbell's company of cavalry, pushed on to Washington, Georgia.



The main body of the escort and train of wagons, all under command of Secretary of War Breckinridge, at last gathered into camp on the Georgia side of the river. The members of the escort who had left their homes behind them and, hopeless of any revival of the war spirit, now turned insubordinate, practically demanded a distribution of the specie they were guarding. After Breckinridge had reported this state of affairs to Davis the treasury was divided, the troops then disappeared, and Breckinridge and Benjamin struck off for the Florida coast and finally reached England.

On arrival at the little village of Washington, the doors of a private house were thrown open to Davis and the next day the last Cabinet meeting of the Confederacy was held. Mallory bade goodbye to his chief; Davis then with Reagan and four or five of his personal staff set out for southwestern Georgia. Before starting he had a conference with Captain Campbell, telling him of his plans and relieving him of all obligations to go any farther, but that he would like to have ten volunteers to go with him if they felt like doing so; Campbell on notifying his men of this request reported that the whole company volunteered. Davis selected ten of the big-hearted company, joining after a march of two or three days Mrs. Davis, her sister Miss Howell, the children and servants, who under the immediate charge of the President's private secretary, Burton Harrison,

and an escort of a few paroled Confederate soldiers, had started on their travels several weeks previously.

On the evening of the second day after overtaking them and while preparations were being made to leave at daybreak and continue the journey, one of Davis' aides, Colonel Preston, who had been to a neighboring village, reported that it was rumored a band of marauders would attack the camp that night. About daybreak, hearing firing, Davis sprang to his feet and going out saw that regular soldiers and not bandits were making the attack; he went back to the tent to notify Mrs. Davis. He picked up and put on Mrs. Davis' raglan, mistaking it in the dark for his light overcoat, and as he went out Mrs. Davis threw her shawl over his head as a disguise. He had advanced but a few steps when a mounted soldier, after some angry words from Davis, presented his carbine and ordered him to halt. Mrs. Davis rushed out and threw her arms about his neck and begged the soldier not to kill him. Seeing now all hope of escape gone, he quietly turned back and seated himself on a fallen tree near the dying-down camp fire till the commanding officer of the troops, Col. Pritchard, came up, demanding his name and surrender.

A correspondent of lively imagination, who was not present at the capture, at once telegraphed his paper from Macon that Davis had been taken, and in women's clothes. Thereupon the cartoonist seized

his pad, and then his pencil pictured Davis accordingly, much to the exuberant amusement and delight of his enemies. But in time, as usual, truth made its way, and the cartoonist's testimony was ruled out, and now in the periodicals of the past they lie petrified, so to speak, like the bones of the Saurians of the carboniferous period.

While on his way to Macon to be delivered to General Wilson, whose troops had made the capture, he learned that a reward of one hundred thousand dollars had been offered for his arrest by President Johnson, charging him, Stephens, Clay and others with complicity in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. He was amazed and indignant.

On his arrival at Macon, some troops drawn up before Wilson's headquarters saluted him as he passed through their ranks to the door of Wilson's hotel. Wilson treated him well; and in the course of an extended interview with him referred to the President's proclamation for his arrest, when Davis replied: "The man who signed that proclamation knew that I would a thousand times rather have Abraham Lincoln to deal with as President of the United States than to have him."

Wilson, who had been at West Point as a cadet while Davis was Secretary of War and Senator, says that in his long talk with Davis that, however petulant he may have been at the time of his capture, he had regained complete equanimity and inquired

most kindly of his old friends in the West Point faculty — Church, Bartlett and Mahan — and that he spoke unreservedly and feelingly of Lee, declaring him to be the ablest, most courageous, most aggressive and most beloved of all the Confederate generals, and that he referred to Mr. Lincoln and his untimely death in terms of respect and kindness.

At the close of the day Wilson started Davis and all his party on a special train for Augusta. Mrs. Clay of Alabama, whose husband was included in the proclamation as one of the conspirators and had given himself up conscious of his innocence, says that as she entered the car Davis embraced her, saying, "This is a sad meeting, Jennie!" and offered her a seat beside him. At Augusta, they with Vice-President Stephens, General Wheeler and his adjutant-general, were packed in a miserable river boat, which took them down the river and around to Hilton Head where they were transferred to the steamer *Clyde*, which soon sailed accompanied by the war vessel *Tuscarora* with shotted guns for Fort Monroe. Before sailing Mrs. Davis sent a note to General Saxton in command at Hilton Head, asking him, as an old friend, if he would not take her little negro protégé Jim Brooks and see to his education and welfare.

Jim, left an orphan in babyhood, Ellen, Mrs. Davis' maid, had been a second mother to him, and being about Jeff Junior's, age, they had been playmates

from the cradle. Shortly before the *Clyde* sailed, a boat from Saxton came along side and by strategem, he was induced to go aboard of her, and as she backed off, realizing what it meant, he screamed pitifully. His playmate, Willie, Ellen and all cried bitterly as they steamed away from the heartbroken, motherless little fellow.

Two days afterward the *Tuscarora*, her flag flying, turned in round Cape Charles with the *Clyde*, and crossing the sunshiny bay, anchored off Fort Monroe. There she lay swinging with the tide by her convoy, while brick-masons, blacksmiths, and carpenters, walled up openings, made heavy doors, and placed iron bars in the embrasures of the casemates that were to serve as prisons for Clay and Davis. Meanwhile, Stephens and Reagan were started for Fort Warren, Boston Harbor; Wheeler and Davis' staff to Fort Delaware; and Burton Harrison, his private secretary, to Fort McHenry at Baltimore.

General Miles, who had been assigned to the command of the Fort, at one p.m. of the twenty-second, set off in a tug accompanied by a squad of soldiers, for the *Clyde*. Davis bade goodbye to his children who were crying, but on taking leave of his wife whispered: "Try not to weep, they will gloat over your grief." On landing at the wharf, Miles, holding Davis by the right arm and preceded by a cavalry detail, first appeared; behind him was a half-dozen soldiers, then came Colonel Pritchard, holding Clay

by the right arm, followed by another armed squad. The procession crossed the moat, passed through the postern, and then to the casemate. Assistant Secretary of War Dana, who with Halleck overlooked the procession, says: "Davis bore himself with a haughty attitude."—This reminds me of a remark he made to one of his prominent officers in Richmond who had just had an interview with a distressed poor woman and had to bring the matter to Davis' attention, he said to him: "Never be haughty to the humble, nor humble to the haughty."—Davis was conducted into the inner room of the casemate. There was a sentry before each door leading into the outer room, an iron hospital bedstead, a stool table, a chair, a movable stool closet, and a Bible; two sentinels outside the doors, an officer and two sentries in the outer room with instructions to see the prisoner every fifteen minutes, the outer door of all locked and key in charge of the officer of the guard; a line of sentries to cut off all access to the casemate, another line beyond the moat and another on top of the parapet over the casemate; and yet, with all these precautions they put manacles on him!

Davis, left alone, walked to the barred embrasure and asked the direction it faced; neither of the two sentinels would answer; he sat down. And this was the Fort Monroe whose guns had thundered for him when Secretary of War and whose troops had saluted with arms and colors — colors that had

waved over him as a Cadet and that he had helped to carry to victory at Monterey and Buena Vista.

That afternoon, Dana, notifying the War Department of Davis' and Clay's incarceration, said, "I have not given orders to have them placed in irons, as Halleck seemed opposed to it, but General Miles is instructed to have fetters ready if he thinks them necessary." Two days afterward, Miles reported to Dana, "Yesterday I directed the irons to be put on Davis' ankles, which he violently resisted, but he became more quiet afterward. His hands are unencumbered."

The following day Davis, as well as Clay, asked if beside the Bible they might have the Prayer Book and some tobacco. Miles referred the request to Halleck who answered "Yes." Tobacco, delicious weed, and my comforter on many a page of this biography, you were in mighty good company that night — the Prayer Book and the Bible.

Meanwhile Mrs. Davis, the children, and Mrs. Clay, after being searched and their baggage thoroughly examined for evidence of their husbands' alleged crimes, were on their way to Savannah aboard the *Clyde* in charge of an officer who treated them well.

The manacles began to chafe Davis' ankles, and the cruelty of it all got wing through the reporters' accounts from Fort Monroe, furnishing afternoon editions with startling headlines. Stanton translated

the deep headlines as reproach and telegraphed Miles, "Please report whether irons have or have not been placed on Jefferson Davis. If they have, when was it done and for what reason, and remove them." Miles replied: "I directed that anklets be put on his ankles, which would not interfere with his walking but would prevent his running should he endeavor to escape. In the meantime I have changed the wooden doors for grated iron ones with locks, and the anklets have been removed."

For one hundred and ten nights with two soldiers, a bright light in his room, two sentinels in the adjoining room walking their posts and relieved every two hours with rattling of arms on the brick floors; the trailing sabre of the officer of the guard who, beside looking after posting the reliefs, had to take a look at the prisoner every fifteen minutes, how much unbroken sleep did or could a night offer?

His food was sent in, but neither knife or fork allowed for fear he might cut his throat or puncture a vein and cheat the gallows. The glaring light on his eye which had never quite recovered from the attack that had destroyed the other, keyed as he was, was intense. In knowing what we do now, the question might be put in all earnestness, Why did he have to suffer as he did?

It is only fair in behalf of Miles, Stanton, and Judge Advocate-General Holt who had to deal with Davis officially, to say that no one not living



at the time can conceive of the depth of the passion over the assassination of Lincoln and the barbarous attempt on the life of Seward. Convulsion after convulsion of feeling took place all over the North, attributing the crime to the South, and especially laying it at the door of its leaders and calling for their execution as traitors and murderers. Sumner in the midst of this frenzy wrote to a friend in England: "You enjoy the overthrow of belligerent slavery. In assassinating our good President it acted naturally, logically and consistently, and yet there are foreigners here who are astonished that Jefferson Davis can be thought guilty of such an atrocity." This letter fairly represented how passion, like a forest fire before a high wind, was sweeping the country.

Moreover, while Davis and Clay were waiting on the *Clyde* till the casemates were made ready the Military Commission for the trial of the assassins was in session, the newspapers filling column after column with the testimony and vivid descriptions of the criminals, all of which the public read with deepening horror.

Again, among the earliest witnesses was a shrewd, impecunious lawyer, Conover by name, who testified early in the trial that Davis and Clay, from his own knowledge, were implicated in bringing about the assassination. Later he went to Holt, the Judge Advocate-General and told him he could furnish

evidence, written and verbal, to establish the truth of his testimony before the Commission. Holt believed him, and Conover began at once to organize a gang of perjurers who supplied Holt with sworn depositions confirming his allegations. Holt laid these depositions before Stanton; he also believed them true and it was not until eleven months later, that, upon the confession of one of this gang, the discovery was made of the utter fraud which Conover had perpetrated. While this testimony remained unchallenged, and the fires kindled by the assassination of Lincoln still burning fiercely, it is only fair to Stanton, Miles and Holt to bear these circumstances in mind. Not to have been influenced by them in dealing with Davis and Clay is more than can be expected of human nature.

Contributing to the harshness of Davis' treatment and above all to root deeply a calloused unfavorable opinion, during the trial of Wirtz, the prosecuting attorney from the Bureau of Military Justice offered testimony to prove that Davis was as much, if not more, to blame than Wirtz for the cruelties and deaths at Andersonville.

The trial began on the twenty-third of August and Wirtz was executed on the tenth of November. On the night before his execution two men sought an interview with him in his cell and one of them gave him to understand that by a confession implicating Davis with the responsibility of the treatment

of prisoners, they had power to save him from the gallows. That same night his counsel, a Mr. Schade of Washington, says: "Some parties came to the confessor of Wirtz, Reverend Father Boyle, and also to me as his counsel, one of them informing me that a high Cabinet officer wished to assure Wirtz that if he would implicate Davis with the atrocities committed at Andersonville, his sentence would be commuted. The messenger requested me to inform Wirtz of this. In presence of Father Boyle, I told Wirtz next morning what had happened. Captain Wirtz simply and quietly replied, 'Mr. Schade, you know that I have always told you that I do not know anything about Jefferson Davis. He had no connection with me as to what was done at Andersonville. I would not become a traitor to him or any one else even to save my life'."

This statement of Wirtz' counsel is confirmed by a letter to Mr. Davis from Father Boyle. "I know that on the evening of the day before the execution of Major Wirtz, a man visited me on the part of a Cabinet officer to inform me that Major Wirtz would be pardoned if he would implicate Jefferson Davis in the cruelties of Andersonville."

Wirtz, his counsel, and Father Boyle are in the grave. No one to this day knows the name of the Cabinet officer or the mysterious messenger who under the shades of night made his way to and from Wirtz' cell. It was all a horrible, horrible business,

and we think a November night's stars never looked down on a wickeder one.

Relative to the charges against Davis of cruelty to prisoners, it is opportune to say that Mrs. Davis having appealed to Horace Greely and he realizing, through the sensitiveness of his nature what Davis, guilty or innocent, must be suffering in prison, asked Judge Shea of New York, if he would not try to secure an early trial for Davis. Shea was unwilling to give his professional services unless satisfied that the charge against him of famine and cruelty to Northern prisoners was untrue.

It so happened that the Confederate archives were in Canada, and at the request of Greely, Governor Andrew and Vice-President Wilson Shea went to Montreal and there examined the records. He returned to New York convinced that Davis, directly and indirectly, was guiltless of indifference to the welfare of prisoners that fell into Confederate hands. Whereupon Greely threw his whole heart into an effort to secure a trial at once, let the charges be what they might, for as an American citizen, Davis was entitled to a speedy trial. O'Connor of New York had already volunteered his services, and from then on to the end became the fearless legal champion for Davis. When Conover's malicious charges were exposed and one after another of the real facts became known, a reaction set in, and President Johnson said in an interview with Mrs.

Davis that he was satisfied that Davis was not a party to the assassination of Lincoln. So much then as to the intensity of public feeling and its reaction on Stanton and Holt who had to deal officially with the character of Davis' imprisonment at its beginning.

It will be remembered that the Secretary of War in a somewhat peremptory despatch ordered General Miles to unshackle Davis. The order was executed on the forenoon of a Sunday, May 28, and in the afternoon Dr. Craven, who had been assigned to look after the health of Davis and Clay, went to his casemate. "Immediately on entering," says Craven in his "Prison Life of Davis," "Mr. Davis rose from his seat, both hands extended and his eyes filled with tears. He was evidently about to say something, but checked himself; or, was checked by a rush of emotion, and sat down on his bed."

A month later General Miles entered the casemate while the doctor was making his professional call and announced that Davis would be allowed an hour's exercise on the ramparts; and that afternoon, General Miles supporting him on one side and the officer of the day on the other, followed by four armed guards, he enjoyed his first breath of open air and the sight from the green parapets of the coming and going ships, the low, distant, dreaming coast line and the wide expanse of softly heaving sea.

On one of these walks he met Clay and exchanged greetings in French with him, which alarmed the

guard who did not understand the language, and they were not allowed to pass each other or meet again. Davis, struck with Clay's appearance, inquired with much sympathy for his fellow-prisoner, and Dr. Craven says this: "Let me here remark that despite a certain exterior cynicism of manner, no patient has ever crossed my path who, suffering so much himself, appeared to feel so warmly and tenderly for others."

President Johnson, to satisfy himself as to Davis' condition and treatment, sent McCulloch, his Secretary of Treasury, to Fort Monroe to see Davis. McCulloch says: "I was most favorably impressed by his manners and conversation, . . . hearing Davis' account of his treatment, I felt as he did that for a time he had been dastardly treated . . . he had the bearing of a born and high-bred gentleman."

Says Craven, 'I called with Captain Evans, officer of the day, on the twenty-eighth of August. Davis was then suffering great prostration from erysipelas and a carbuncle, and was in low spirits, — fearing that he should die without opportunity of rebutting in public trial the imputed stigma of having had a share in the conspiracy to assassinate Mr. Lincoln and leave the reproach on his children.

"Of Mr. Lincoln he then spoke, not in affected terms of regard and admiration, but paying a simple and sincere tribute to his goodness of character and honesty of purpose . . . also to his official purity

and freedom from avarice . . . that the Southern papers in the beginning of the war had labored to render Lincoln abhorrent and contemptible, but that such efforts were against his judgment."

"They charge me with crime, Doctor, but God knows my innocence. I endorsed no measure that was not justified by the laws of war. Failure is all forms of guilt in one to men who occupied my position. Should I die, repeat this for the sake of my people, my dear wife, and my poor darling children. Tell the world I only loved America, and that in following my State, I was only carrying out doctrines received from revered lips in my early youth and adopted by my judgment as the conviction of riper years."

Vice-President Stephens and Reagan, Postmaster-General in Davis' Cabinet, were released on parole in October, and Clay a few months later.

In the spring of 1866, Congress appointed a committee, headed by Boutwell of Massachusetts, to report on the facts in Davis' case, and recommend his trial by a Commission or the Courts. The War Department turned over all the evidence it had to the Committee, who in turn put it into the hands of Lieber, the son of whose fame as a writer, scholar, jurist, has not yet set. Lieber says, among other things, that the Judiciary Committee had asked him to report upon whether or not there was any evidence that Jefferson Davis or the Richmond government

knew about the assassination plots, and whether or not there was any circumstantial evidence confirming things that appeared in the trials of Lincoln's assassins. "Some 270,000 letters have been examined for this and other purposes. There remain about 60,000 more to be examined and verified . . . Davis will not be found guilty and we shall stand there completely beaten."

Meanwhile Davis' counsel were pushing more and more ardently for a trial and at last a day was set, and on the tenth orders were issued directing General Burton, Miles successor, to produce his prisoner before the United States District Court in Richmond, on Monday, May 13.

During the week of the tenth, two events took place worthy of record, — Ex-President Pierce made a visit to Davis and we can easily imagine their greeting, for they loved each other well; they had not only shared the dangers of battle fields in Mexico, but also four years of trying official relations as President and Cabinet officer.

The other event was the marriage of Ellen, Mrs, Davis' maid, and Frederick Maginnis, of whom Mrs. Davis says, "a colored man, a courteous, refined gentleman in his instincts." He had offered his services gratuitously to Mrs. Davis on her arrival at Savannah from Fort Monroe, but she paid him wages regularly, which he divided with his old mistress in Georgia. "He was a second



Providence to us by his care of Mr. Davis after I was allowed to go to him," says Mrs. Davis.

On one occasion when asked by a curious woman who had made an excursion to the Fort the whereabouts of "Jeff" he answered, with a bow, "I am sorry, Madam, not to be able to tell you where he is. I do not know such a person." "Are you not his servant?" she inquired. "No, Madam," he answered, "you are quite mistaken, I have the honor to serve Ex-President Davis." "What this judicious, capable, delicate-minded man did for us could not be computed in money or told in words; he and his gentle wife took the sting out of many indignities offered to us in our misfortune. They were both objects of affection and esteem to Mr. Davis as long as he lived," so says Mrs. Davis.

On Friday, May 11, the United States Marshal accompanied by Judge Ould gave General Burton the order of the War Department to bring Davis before the Court in Richmond. Saturday morning, Davis, arrayed in a mixed black suit, bade good-bye to the officers of the garrison and then, with Mrs. Davis, General Burton, Dr. Craven, and Burton Harrison, his affectionate private secretary, boarded the *John Sylvester* and started up the James, and the green parapets of Fort Monroe, where for just eight days short of two years he had been confined, faded away with their over-streaming colors. When the boat reached Brandon Landing the Misses

Harrison came aboard, greeting Davis with swimming eyes. They arrived at Richmond about six o'clock and the party drove to the Spottswood Hotel, and at every doorway and window on the way were smiling faces wafting welcome home again. The street was packed in front of the hotel, and when he and Mrs. Davis got out of the carriages, some one shouted "Hats off, Virginians!" He was assigned to the very same rooms that he had occupied on arrival from Montgomery six years before. There were flowers there to welcome him and old friends came in, their faces blooming with a deep joy, tears hanging on their lashes or sparkling there as we sometimes see the gathered dew in the early morning. The next day, Sunday, he stayed in his rooms, receiving callers who came in on the way from church.

At eleven o'clock Monday, he was taken to the court room in the Custom House, a room about forty feet square—and already every seat was filled, while outside were great crowds of white and black. Davis was first placed in the prisoner's dock, and the Marshal, with fine feeling, asked Harrison to go and sit beside him. Later the courtesy was extended by conducting him to the counsel's table within the bar to a seat beside O'Connor, a smallish man with thin gray hair, brilliant eyes and a firm but low voice. By his side sat Reed of Philadelphia, Judge Shea, Ould and Beverly Tucker of Virginia.

On the other side of the table sat Evarts, spare, pale and grave, Chandler and Wells representing the United States.

There was a sensation when an elderly man wearing glasses and dressed in an antiquated black suit, his black silk cravat in wild entanglement, and totally unselfconscious of place or occasion, walked up and took a seat beside Evarts. He brought in an atmosphere of natural gentleness with him. It was Horace Greely who had done more than any man living to arouse his countrymen against slavery and who was the first to ask for mercy to Davis and every Southerner who had borne arms in behalf of the Confederacy.

And may I at this point say that were I to historically duplicate the Constellation of Orion, I should put Lincoln for the upper star, Davis the lower, Grant, Greely and Lee in the belt.

With Greely came in Augustus Schell of New York, with a benevolent face — a life-long Democrat, representing himself and Vanderbilt on the bail bond of \$100,000 which it was understood would be called for in case of Davis' release for future trial.

Presently the judge, Underwood, entered from the lobby, whereupon the Marshal cried out, "Hear ye, hear ye! The United States District Court is now opened and silence is commanded. God save the United States!"

Burton then brought Davis before the Court and reading the order he had received, the Marshal took charge of the accused, who then took a seat beside O'Connor.

The Judge proceeded to deliver a lecture on the wickedness of rebellion, the magnitude of treason, etc., during which unusual proceedings, Davis never raised his eyes. O'Connor then addressed the Court to the effect that the defence was ready for the trial of the case. Evarts then notified the Court that the Government was not ready for trial but was willing the accused should go on bail. Thereupon the bail bond was offered. Greely was the first to sign it and then Schell. Davis went at once to Greely, grasped his hand and in a few words earnestly thanked him. Greely accepted his thanks with an abashed expression, his countenance, however, filled with an inward pleasure, and the song of his pillow that night was like that of the Good Samaritan.

When the bail bond was fully signed, the Court released Davis, and a mighty shout went up from inside and outside the court room. Hundreds of colored men wished to take Davis' hand, and a mighty mass, cheering and waving hats escorted him back to the Spottswood, and on entering his room it was redolent with the scent of flowers, and old friends were there to give him their hands.

That afternoon he and Mrs. Davis drove out to

Hollywood and placed roses and violets on the grave of their little boy who had been accidentally killed by falling from the upper veranda. A prayer of thankfulness was held in their room, led by his old friend Dr. Minnegerode, and that night he and Mrs. Davis started for Montreal, where the children were at school.

The thoughtful of the North, and not few in numbers, who, during the two years he had been in prison had feared the results of a trial with its frightful possibilities of a gallows throwing its shadow across the sky of the country's past, drew a deep sigh of relief over his release and thanked God that mankind had outgrown the old barbaric notion that the sleep of the dead, to be unbroken, demanded a sacrifice.

But the companions of vengeance, on whose ears the voice of compassion broke in vain now, like a pack of thwarted timber wolves, set up a dismal howl over the escape of their prey and at once turned on Greely, snarling and showing their teeth.

The President of the Union Club of New York wrote to him that a special meeting of the Club had been asked for to take into consideration his conduct in going on the bail bond of Davis and desired to know what evening would be convenient. Greely at once replied:

*"Gentlemen:* I shall not attend your meeting this evening. You evidently regard me as a weak sen-

timentalist misled by a maudlin philosophy. I arraign you as narrow-minded blockheads who would like to be useful to a great and good cause, but do not know how. Your attempt to base a great enduring party on the hate and wrath necessarily engendered by bloody civil war is as though you should plant a colony on an iceberg which had somehow drifted into a tropical sea. I tell you here that out of a life earnestly devoted to the good of human kind, your children will select my going to Richmond and signing that bail bond as the wisest act. . . . So long as any is at heart opposed to the National Unity . . . I shall do my best to deprive him of power. . . . So long as any man was seeking to overthrow our government he was my enemy; from the hour in which he laid down his arms, he was my formerly erring countryman."

While Davis was in prison, Greely was writing his "American Conflict," and the second volume was in press when he went on Davis' bail bond; thereupon thousands of the subscribers cancelled their subscriptions throwing heavy losses on his publishers.

Lee wrote to Davis, June 1, 1867: "*My dear Mr. Davis:* You can conceive better than I can express, the misery which your friends have suffered from your long imprisonment. To none has this been more painful than to me; and the impossibility of affording relief has added to my distress. Your

release has lifted a load from my heart which I have not words to tell, and my daily prayer to the Great Author of the world is that He may shield you from all evil, and give you that peace which the world cannot take away. That the rest of your days may be triumphantly happy is the sincere and earnest wish of your most obedient, faithful friend and servant.

R. E. LEE."

The winter climate of Canada proving too severe for Davis in his weak condition, toward the end of the year, by advice of his physician, he went to Havana, and after the holidays to New Orleans. The people thronged to greet him, giving him a reception that was spontaneous and tender. At first in the furrowed lines of his face they saw what he had gone through and were touched with sympathy, but on meeting him and noting the same old dignity in his bearing, the same noble lustre of fortitude and kindness in his eye, and his voice still keyed with its courteous, appealing tones, they gave him their hands and cheers that went to his heart. To them he was the embodiment of the Southern gentleman and the champion of the Lost Cause hallowed by many a deed of bravery and death on the field.

From New Orleans he went to his old plantation, now a scene of neglect, conflagration, waste and pillage; stables, flower beds, roses yellow and red,

gardens, all the labors of his early life blotted out, and desolation, with her feet in the ashes, sat at the foot of lone chimneys croaking to the silence of the one-time happy dooryard and blooming cotton fields.

The aged slaves, who still clung to the old home quarters, flocked to see him, glad, truly glad to take the hand of the proud, kind master of their youth.

For the sake of his health, he went to Europe with his family and received many civilities from members of the English nobility. Could he go now, from the British officers and soldiers who served with the grandsons of the Confederacy and the grandsons of the Union when they broke the German line we think many a high cheer would welcome him and should Grant's spirit appear at his side, applause would break from Westminster and wherever the sea strikes the shores of Old England.

While in Paris, Napoleon III sent a staff officer offering an audience, but not wishing to say anything uncivil, Davis begged to be excused, as he felt that Napoleon had not been sincere in his dealing with the Confederacy.

On his return he accepted the presidency of a Southern Life Insurance Company with headquarters in Memphis, whose generous-hearted people offered to buy him a handsome residence which, from a delicate sense of propriety, he declined, although deeply appreciating their liberality. Owing to a



reckless system of issuing policies and the prevalence of yellow fever, the company was soon in trouble, and after putting everything he could command into it to save it, the company wound up with heavy losses to himself and stockholders.

General Robert Ransom of North Carolina and the Confederate army, in his "Reminiscences of Davis" relates the following incident while on a visit to Davis in Memphis, prefacing it by stating: "At the table he said grace, or asked a blessing, first seating himself and then with bowed head, in silence making the invocation.

"During one of my visits, just after being seated an unusual commotion was heard in the passage leading to the dining room, and almost instantly in rushed the bright, fair-haired Willie, his youngest son, a lad of eight or ten years, followed by a half-dozen or more about his own age whom Willie had brought in to dinner. He rapidly told of some gardening or other work he had in hand and which he wished finished at a certain time and, not being able to accomplish it so soon himself, had gone into the streets and gathered a promiscuous party of laborers, completed the task voluntarily assumed, and now wanted dinner for his co-workers. I could easily discern the feeling of his father; with great cheerfulness and an expression of pride and satisfaction, Mr. Davis aided in providing for his fine boy's guests, and with delicate tact and discriminat-

ing conversation soon had each little fellow as comfortable and unembarrassed as if on a picnic."

Soon thereafter this son, William Howell, died with diphtheria, and in October, 1878, when the yellow fever raged in Memphis, his only surviving son, Jefferson junior, twenty-one years old and who had become a companion of his aged father, fell a victim, and his death struck deep.

Some time previous, Mrs. Dawson, a friend, had sold to Davis her home at Beauvoir, Mississippi. It had a broad veranda, flowered approaches, and stood amid an open grove of live oaks close by the shore of the Gulf lapping its beach day and night with soft murmurs. He was there when this grief fell upon him, writing the "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy." He laid down his pen and for days sat in silence till that blessed Comforter which feels for us all reached out a hand, and he took up his pen again.

He who would see how the mind of Jefferson Davis worked under the shadow of grief and a raging storm of calumny; how deep in it lay the foundation of his belief in the sovereignty of States; with what fairness he dealt with the four years of battling campaigns in the discharge of the duties of the Presidency, let him read the "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy."

It was begun in 1878; it was finished in 1881, and here is the way it ended. Mrs. Davis in her

"Memoirs" says: "It was four o'clock, and I had been writing since eight o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Davis dictated: 'In asserting the right of secession it has not been my wish to incite to its exercise. I recognize the fact that the war showed it to be impracticable, but this did not prove it to be wrong; and now, that it may not be again attempted, and the Union may promote the general welfare, it is needful that the truth, the whole truth, should be known, so that crimination and recrimination may forever cease, and then on the basis of fraternity and faithful regards for the rights of the States, there may be written on the arch of the Union *Este perpetua*.'

I looked up after a momentary silence to remind him that he had forgotten to continue, and he smilingly said, 'I think I am done.' And so he finished his life's work for his Countrymen."

In every great moving symphony there is one impelling note and bar that is repeated and re-repeated. We think the candor of this final statement in the "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," is such a note and bar in the character of Davis.

A few years later in an address before the Legislature of Mississippi, after referring to his boyhood in the State and his ambition to do something that would rebound to its honor and glory, he touched again that high, manly chord, saying: "Our people have accepted the decree, it therefore behooves them

to promote the general welfare of the Union, to show the world that hereafter, as heretofore, the patriotism of our people is not measured by line of latitude and longitude but is as broad as the obligations they have assumed and embraces the whole of our ocean-bound domain."

Meanwhile Southern mothers, wives and sisters had established the touching and beautiful ceremony of Decoration Day. The effect of this ceremony with its processions and music, old veterans in their gray uniforms, here and there a surviving color-bearer who had secretly stripped the flag from its staff on surrendering, and had brought it forth marching proudly as it waved over him again on his way to the graves of his comrades — all this was to endear the memory of the Confederacy and to lift Davis in his old age, to a throne as it were, of affection and reverence. For had he not been their intrepid never-quailing standard-bearer, the exponent and representative of ideas for which he and they had staked all? The result was, that a longing to see him grew, invitations weighted with tenderness poured in thenceforth to attend the dedications of monuments and celebrations of one kind and another. On one of these occasions in addressing delegates of the Southern Historical Society at New Orleans, he said: "As for me, I speak only for myself, our Cause was so just, so sacred, that had I known all that has come to pass, had I known what was to be inflicted

on me, all that my country was to suffer, I would do it again. If I be asked, as is possible, Why do you wish to perpetuate these bitter memories [that is the historic records of the war], I say in no spirit of vengeance, with no desire for vainglory, with no wish for sectional exultation, but that the posterity of men such as I have described may rise equal to their parents, higher if possible, and that the South may exhibit for all time to come the noble qualities which her sons have hitherto manifested."

In that same address he said, speaking of the Southern troops: "Throughout the war, I never went into an army without finding their camp engaged in prayer." Our men on the picket line at Petersburg heard their hymns and prayers more than once during the winter of '64-'65.

About this time a teacher in a Southern college for girls wrote Davis for a sentiment at an exercise, and he sent her the following:

*"For my fellow-countrywomen:*

Be ye slow to anger, swift to forgive, and hold fast that charity that raises the lowly with the self-respect that stoops not to the haughty."

About this time too, General Grant was dying at Mt. McGregor, and the *Boston Globe* asked Davis to prepare a criticism on Grant's career. He replied declining for the following reasons:

"First, General Grant is dying.

Second, Though he invaded our Country, it was

with an open hand, and, so far as I know, he abetted neither arson, nor pillage, and has since the war, I believe, shown no malignity to Confederates either of the military or civil service.

Therefore instead of seeking to disturb the quiet of his closing hours, I would, if it were in my power, contribute to the peace of his mind and the comfort of his body.

JEFFERSON DAVIS."

It will be remembered that Buckner and Joseph E. Johnston of the Confederate army were pallbearers at Grant's funeral, a tribute to his character beyond measure, and a glorious example also of the natural magnanimity of our country — North and South.

As the fires of the war burned down there was in the broad-minded of the North a desire to see and to know Mr. Davis. We will give but two of the many recorded interviews with him; and first that of Massachusetts' greatest all-round man of his day, my friend, Charles Francis Adams, who in his autobiography says:

"Recurring to Fessenden and what he told me of my grandfather, Jefferson Davis was on that topic the most outspoken of all I met. [He is relating incidents of a visit to Washington before the war.] I do not, indeed, with the exception of Joshua R. Giddings, remember any public man of that epoch

who seemed to feel such a genuine sense of appreciation for J. Q. Adams as Jefferson Davis, and he repeatedly put himself on record on the subject. Davis, by the way, impressed me that winter more agreeably than any Southern man I met. I did not see him again until in May, 1885, I called on him at his home at Beauvoir, near New Orleans; but to me he was a distinctly attractive as well as interesting personality. Of medium height and spare figure, he had an essentially Southern face, but he was very much of a gentleman in his address — courteous, unpretending and yet quietly dignified. A man in no way aggressive, yet not to be trifled with. I instinctively liked him; and regret extremely that it was not my good fortune, then or later, to see more of him."

McClure in his "Recollections of Half a Century" on a visit at Beauvoir says that Mr. Davis in reply to a question as to terms he might have offered or received to end the conflict, said: "He could not of his own motion have made any proposition that did not involve the perpetuity of the Confederacy." He concisely stated the difference between the Federal and the Confederate Governments; that the President of the former was practically a sovereign, while the President of the Confederacy represented a nation founded on individual States and, as such, he could not make a peace that denied their sovereignty.

"I shall never forget," says McClure, a life-long Republican, "the earnest and pathetic conclusion of his remarks about Lincoln, when he said substantially 'Next to the failure of the Confederacy, the darkest day the South has seen was the day of Lincoln's assassination'."

Such then, was the impression Davis' personality — that has been my chief aim to set forth, — made on two keen, manly observers who had fought against him.

And now, as I wish to hold the reader's respect and that I may not be open to the charge of deliberately withholding from him adverse opinions of Mr. Davis, let me give the severest estimate, considering its source, that was ever made of him. It is to be found in a letter from John A. Campbell, Confederate assistant secretary of war, written from Fort Pulaski while undergoing arrest for complicity in the assassination of Lincoln, to Ex-Judge B. R. Curtis of Boston with whom, before the war he had served on the bench of the United States Supreme Court. They had been fellow-democrats, and the main and declared purpose of the letter, was to enlist Curtis' influence with Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor to the Presidency, for his release on parole and a speedy trial.

After a résumé of his efforts to prevent secession and the grounds in justification for giving it his support, namely, "It appeared to be a war upon



the political and government within the Confederate states," he went on to say:

"But he [Davis] was unfitted to manage a revolution or to conduct an administration. Slow, procrastinating, obstructive, filled with petty scruples and doubts, and wanting in clear, strong, intrepid judgment, a vigorous resolution and a generous and self-sacrificing nature, he became in the closing part of the war, an incubus and mischief."

Campbell had been, as stated in his letter, an original and ardent opponent of secession: convinced of the North's overpowering numbers and resources in case of war. To whatsoever degree the South's, early victories may have sapped this conviction, on the fall of Vicksburg and the defeat of Lee at Gettysburg it regained full vigor and soon blew out hope's candles of ultimate success. Born with delicacy of feeling, long, keen foresight and haunted by this foreboding prepossession, it is easy to realize his state of mind as the war drew on and he came in full view of inevitable and utter defeat.

To him worn, grieved and hopeless, every hour the Confederacy lived thereafter was only a painful prolongation of mental agony. "In the light of the inevitable, why in Heaven's name not ask for terms?" that, that we believe was the appeal of his troubled, judicial mind. In times of revolution and faced with a national crisis there is no mind so

worried and we think so helpless as the fully developed judicial mind, for it is born wingless.

One can easily see, then, how Davis' defiant, unconquerable will must have annoyed and provoked Mr. Campbell as day after day he continued the struggle. Truly, to a mind in the state of Judge Campbell's, Davis must have been "an incubus and mischief."

But refined, able, gifted and high-minded as Mr. Campbell was, and inevitable as defeat was, could the South with honor and self-respect have laid down its arms and acknowledged defeat? Could Lee's old army of Northern Virginia have broken away, gone off home leaving him and Davis standing alone? Oh no, no! For the rearing of that arch of triumph that spans North and South, its abutments on Gettysburg and Appomattox, it was better, far better, we think, that Lee and his army should stand by Davis, march on to Appomattox and there lay down their arms in honorable surrender, cheering Lee when he returned from accepting Grant's generous terms, and he with tears in his eyes saying he had done the best he could for them. Yes, he and Davis had done the best they could for the men who had carried the colors of the Confederacy on so many fields. That is the reason why Sherman's army, the Army of the Potomac and the country at large is proud of the victory won, a victory won by gallant men over gallant men, and above all, the

fruits of that victory, that triumphant arch of good will, already spoken of, spanning North and South.

History has no page, so far as I am aware, that equals the achievement embodied in that arch by any nation in the world, namely, the people of the sections after four years of bitter war, overmatching their bravery by becoming friends once more before old age had whitened the hair of the men who wore the blue and the gray.

Next to Grant I believe that Davis by the friendliness of his bearing and candor in intercourse with Northern men of influence and character, by urging his people on all occasions to obey the laws, and above all by refraining in addressing associations of veterans from saying anything to re-kindle the fagots of animosities, contributed more than any one man to the accomplishment of that great national achievement.

## CHAPTER XXIV

AND now with this background of cadet, army, plantation, Cabinet and Congressional life, of leadership of the Confederacy, of defeat, all suffused in his old age with the light of a brave integrity and good feeling for friend and foe, he waited the sunset of this mortal life.

About this time, and when old age is prone to dwell on the past, he wrote the following letter to one of his former slaves: "Both Mr. and Mrs. Davis are thankful to their old friend Milo Cooper for the lemons and for his congratulations. Mr. Davis passed his eightieth birthday in good health and spirits for one of his age, and is cheered by the kind spirit evinced by so many friends.

Your friends,

JEFFERSON and MRS. DAVIS."

When Cooper heard a few months later that Mr. Davis was dangerously ill, he set out on foot from Florida for New Orleans to be by the bedside of his old master.

By the way, the explanation for the friendship of every colored man who had ever known Davis may be found in the following incident related by the President of Millsap College, Mississippi. "I got

a lesson in the treatment of negroes when I was returning South from Harvard. I stopped in Washington and called on Jefferson Davis, then United States Senator. We walked down Pennsylvania Avenue. Many negroes bowed to Mr. Davis and he returned the bow. He was a very polite man. I finally said to him that I thought he must have a great many friends among the negroes. He replied: "I cannot allow any negro to outdo me in courtesy."

But indeed there must have been something back of this formal courtesy which the negroes' deeply sympathetic natures had discovered, felt sure of, and appreciated, and to which their spontaneous testimonials bear witness on his death that came about in this way.

During a visit to his plantation at Brierfield in the last of November, 1889, he was exposed to a cold rain that brought on an acute attack of bronchitis. He started at once for home, but on arrival at New Orleans was so ill he was taken from the steamboat in an ambulance to the home of Mr. Justice C. E. Fenner.

In the afternoon of December 6 he was stricken with a congestive chill and began to sink rapidly. On Mrs. Davis urging him to take some medicine that his devoted surgeon Dr. Chaillé, had prescribed, with that ever courtesy and gentleness that marked his speech he whispered, "Pray excuse me? I cannot take it," and the eyes that had met his fellow man

with respect and courage closed, and about midnight he died.

Meanwhile, a gray mist had drifted in from the Gulf, which from the veranda at Beauvoir he had gazed on so often, enjoying its murmur, and in deep and heavy drops from live oaks and late-blooming roses it dripped, dripped through the remaining night hours like tears.

Upon the announcement of his death, hands all over the South, associations of veterans, orphans in asylums, school children, students in colleges, began to weave chaplets for his bier; among them were those of his surviving slaves at Brierfield; and we think that not a wreath that was woven or eulogy delivered bore such testimony to the kind of man he was; he had been their friend, he had shared the joys and the griefs of their youth; and as the memories and the friendships of those bygone days came back, their affection wove them into the wreath. The letter they wrote has already been given, but we think it will bear repeating: "We, the old servants and tenants of our beloved master, Honorable Jefferson Davis, have cause to mingle our tears over his death, who was always so kind and thoughtful of our peace and happiness. We extend to you our humble sympathy. Respectfully, your old tenants and servants." Signed by a dozen or more.

Thornton Montgomery, then a man of means, a son of Joseph E. Davis' body servant, Ben Mont-

gomery, wrote to Mrs. Davis the day after her husband's death, as follows, from North Dakota, addressing her in the old plantation style:

"*Miss Varina*: I have watched with deep interest and solicitude, the illness of Mr. Davis at Brierfield, his trip down on the steamer *Leathers*, and your meeting and returning with him to the residence of Dr. Payne in New Orleans; and I had hoped that with his great will power to sustain him, he would recover. But, alas for human endeavor! an overruling Providence has willed it otherwise. I appreciate your great loss, and my heart goes out to you in this hour of your deepest affliction.

Would that I could help you bear the burden that is yours today. Since I am powerless to do so, I beg you to accept our tenderest sympathy.

Your very obedient servant,

THORNTON."

James H. Jones sent the following despatch to the mayor of New Orleans:

"Raleigh, North Carolina

As the old body servant of the late Jefferson Davis, my great desire was to be the driver of the remains of my old master to their last resting place. Returning too late to join the State Delegation from this city, I am deprived of the opportunity of showing my lasting appreciation of my best friend.

JAMES H. JONES."

After funeral services in a church — nine governors of Southern States were present, the battle flag of the First Mississippi Rifles that Davis commanded in the Mexican War was on the right of the altar — conducted by clergymen of various denominations, Father Hubbard, S. J., making the closing prayer, the body clothed in Confederate gray, was taken to the City Hall and there lay in state under the guard, day and night, of veteran soldiers. On the coffin was a silk Confederate flag and the sabre he had worn in Mexico. It was estimated that over fifty thousand people passed through the hall, the eyes of many swimming in tears.

In the afternoon the coffin, surmounted by a catafalque, its dome festooned with blended State flags, was placed on a caisson and drawn by six black horses, set out for Metairie graveyard, escorted by veterans of the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans and followed by a long procession. Bells began to toll and minute guns to fire. At the grave a choir sang "I heard a voice from Heaven," then, "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust"; and the sun was going down as the service ended.

On the day of his funeral all over the South minute guns were fired and bells were tolled. Special services were held in Lexington, Virginia, where Lee and Stonewall Jackson lay buried, and in St. Paul's, Richmond, where Davis had worshipped. All the leading newspapers of the North devoted editorial,



obituary columns and many, like the *Springfield Republican* and the *New York Sun*, paid feeling and high tributes.

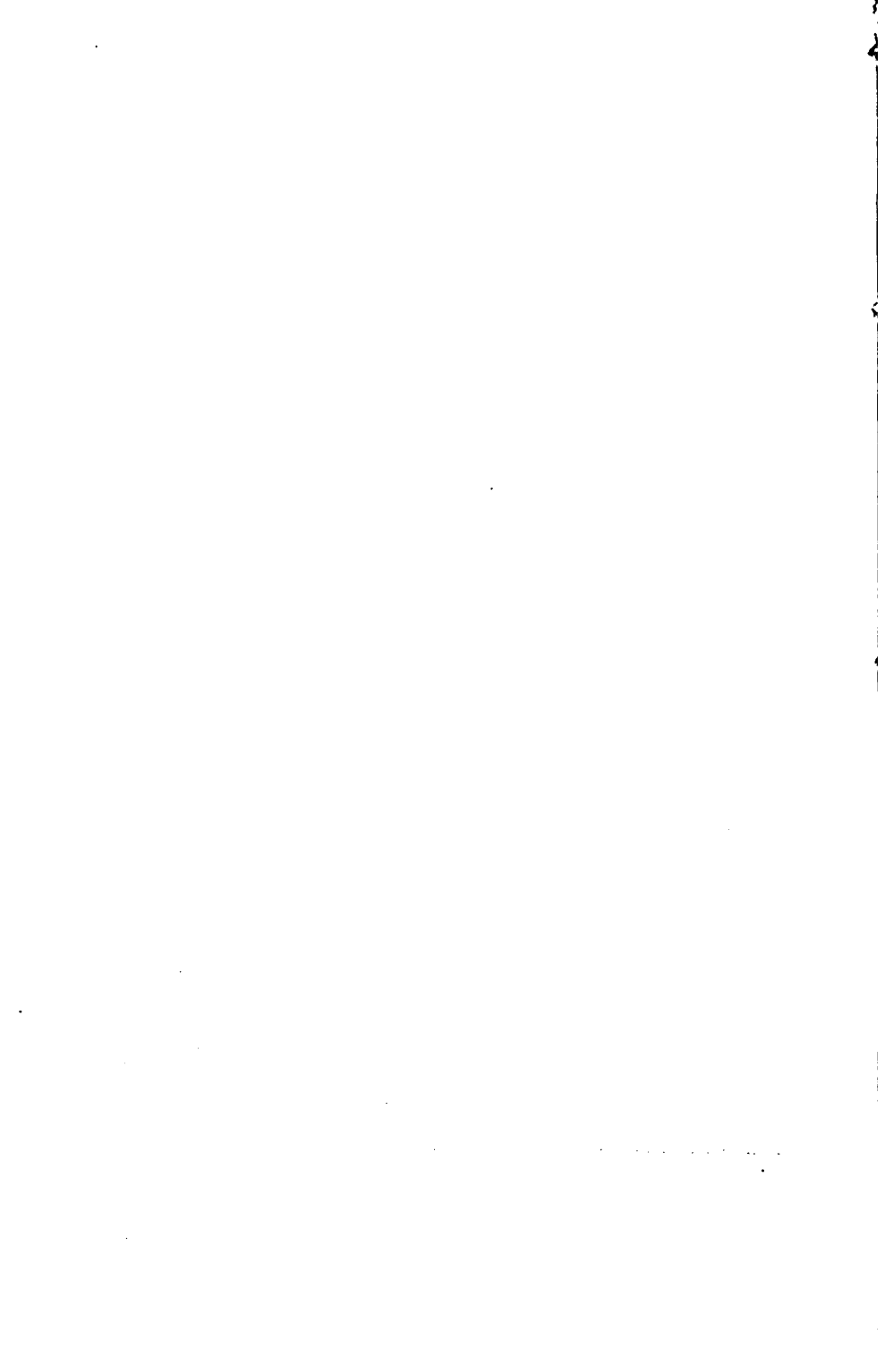
In 1893, the body was taken to Richmond, back to the Capitol of the Confederacy; the train bearing it stopped on its way at his home at Beauvoir, where the little children of the neighborhood had covered the railroad track and the platform at the station with white flowers. On the train's arrival at Montgomery, the body was taken to the Capitol escorted by veterans, the streets thronged and bedecked. Over the right hand of the entrance to the Capitol was "Monterey"; over the left, "Buena Vista," and in an arch between them, in evergreen, was "He suffered for us."

As the train proceeded on its way to Richmond masses of people met it at every station, children offering magnolia and yellow jessamine to the guards. Through the night as the train approached lonely stations in the primeval woods, bonfires greeted it, lit by dwellers of the wilderness, some of whom had ridden over fifty miles to pay their respects.

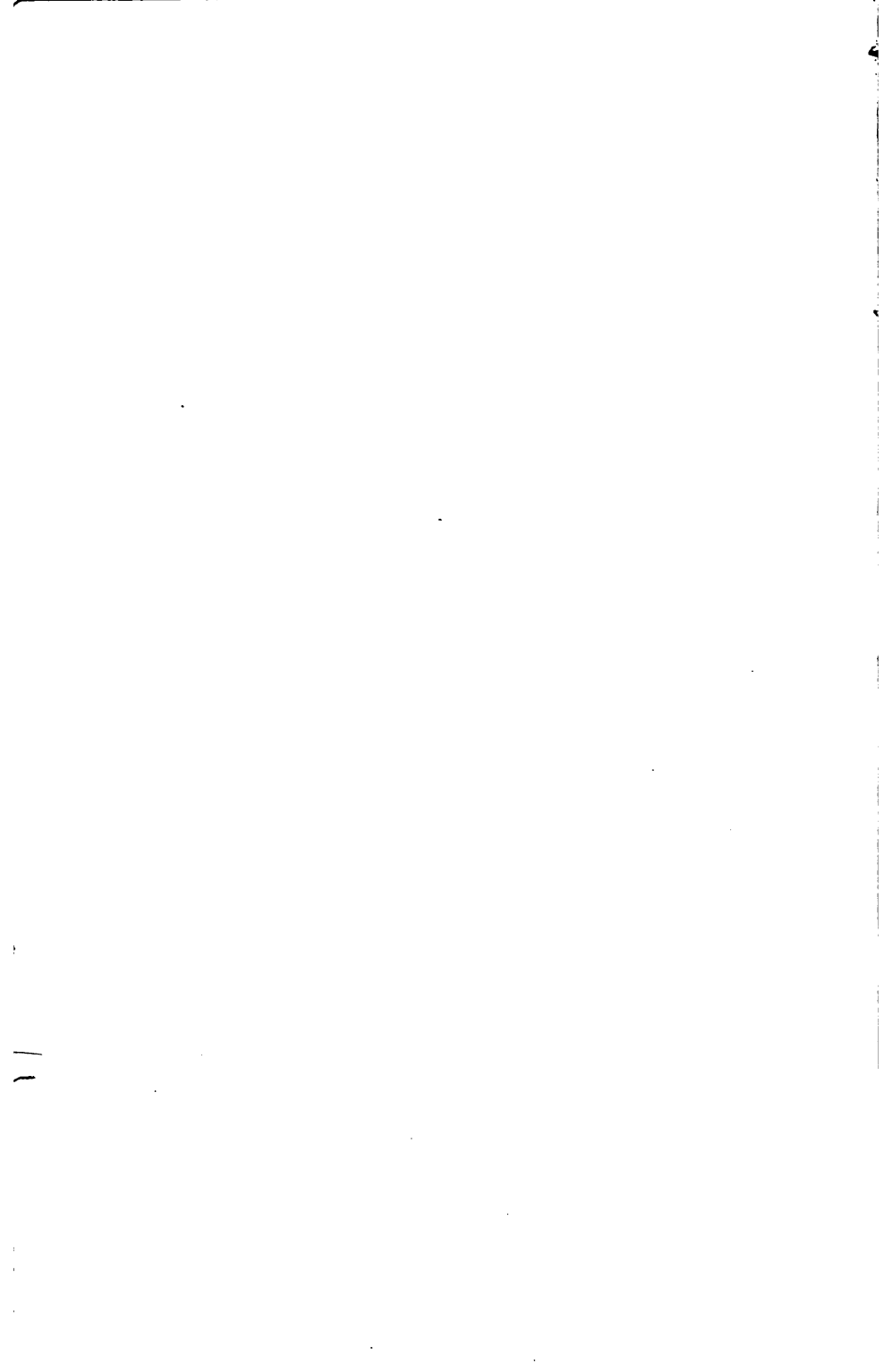
At Danville a vast crowd had gathered in the depot and as the train came to a stop, they sang "Nearer My God to Thee, Nearer to Thee." On its arrival in Richmond, the coffin was taken to the Capitol and placed facing Houdin's statue of Washington; thence by a mighty procession, to

where it lies in Hollywood on the banks of the James.

Reader, here we must part. I have enjoyed your company; I have tried to be fair with you, for I wanted you to be fair with him; here is my hand, and farewell.









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